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THROUGH THE GENEROSITY of a reader *The Nation* is able to offer a prize of $150 for the best essay, 3,600 words in length, on the general subject of "What Is Making for War with England?" The essays must contain an analysis of the conditions making for hostilities between the United States and Great Britain, including emotional and traditional causes, the agitation of interested groups, and deep-seated economic rivalries. The contestants must also outline fundamental remedies to be applied to the cure of the existing situation. The competition closes on April 1, 1929, and no manuscripts received after that day will be considered. The editor of *The Nation* reserves the right to print the winning essay, and such others as may seem desirable, in the columns of this journal. Manuscripts must be typewritten and addressed to Prize Essay Editor, *The Nation;* and return postage must be inclosed. The names of the three distinguished judges who will award the prize will be announced next week.

THE KELLOGG PEACE PACT, which was ratified by the Senate on January 15 was a feeble enough instrument to begin with and it was made still feebler by the report of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the treaty does not prejudice our freedom of action in maintaining the Monroe Doctrine and in protecting citizens abroad. Officially this report is not a reservation, but European opinion will regard it as such. In the fight for the treaty Mr. Borah's leadership was wretched, both as to strategy and as to manner. Not from the first did he show that aggressiveness and confidence which should have marked a man so enthusiastic about the treaty and so completely supported by the Administration. Instead of forcing an early vote he merely asserted that he could get a favorable one whenever he wished—until the favorable outlook passed. He has, moreover, made some extremely damaging admissions. Thus he dealt an extremely serious blow to his bill when, in answer to a question, he declared that our war with Spain would not in any way have been affected by the treaty had it then been in effect! Well, we were the aggressors in that war with an European Power. It had nothing to do with the Monroe Doctrine. If it was not covered by the treaty to renounce war what could be? Mr. Borah had a wonderful text here; a rare opportunity to illustrate that that was of all wars one that could have been avoided by arbitration. Yet he gave away his case. As for Mr. Coolidge, a simple threat to veto the cruiser bill if the treaty failed would have broken down the opposition.

LIFE-INSURANCE RATES on Manchurian generals ought to be very high. Six months after the Manchurian dictator Chang Tso-lin was blown up by a bomb his chief of staff, Yang Yu-ting, who was considered one of the ablest generals in China, was shot by a firing squad without trial. Rumor says that Japan disposed of old Chang because his presence in Manchuria was no longer welcome to the Japanese; rumor also has it that Yang Yu-ting was killed on January 10 by Chang Hsueh-liang, Manchuria's ruler, because Yang was too friendly with Japan, had opposed the joining of Manchuria to the rest of Nationalist China, and had himself plotted a seizure of Manchuria. Whatever may be the truth behind the official reasons for the murder of Yang Yu-ting, Japan's hold upon Manchuria seems to be weakened by the incident. If Yang had gained control of Manchuria he would have taken an attitude toward Japan which is described in an Associated Press dispatch from Tokio as "complacent toward, if not actively supporting, projects for the consolidation of Japan's interest in Manchuria." Meanwhile the general situation in Manchuria continues grave, and Japan has not yet reached an agreement with China concerning the tariff and the Japanese troops now in Shantung.

THE REPORTED SELECTION OF Owen D. Young and J. P. Morgan as American representatives on the International Commission of Experts was certain to please Europe, and has done so. Their ability and their familiarity with the European situation cannot be questioned, though the closeness of Mr. Morgan's relations with France through Morgan & Company of Paris will undoubtedly


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cause questionings to arise in Germany as to whether the choice of someone else without French banking affiliations would not be more judicious. For alternates two other names are suggested, those of Thomas Nelson Perkins and Thomas W. Lamont, also a member of the Morgan firm. No question whatever can be raised as to their fitness. The daily press states that the Washington Government will rely particularly upon Mr. Morgan to see to it that no German railroad bonds shall be marketed in this country. That amounts to prejudging the case; such a matter should certainly be left open for decision after all the facts are in. The mere suggestion of this will add to the great mischief done in Germany by the report that President Coolidge had declared that Germany had proved that it could carry the full reparations payments and that the only question was how many years it would have to continue payments. The need of absolute non-partisanship in the American delegates is the clearer as one reads in dispatches in the New York *Times* that "it becomes increasingly apparent that the reparations settlement will be determined by political considerations."

LIKE A GIGANTIC OCTOPUS the "power trust" is gathering into its tentacles the electric and gas companies of every part of the country. The latest and greatest merger is the $260,000,000 holding company, The United Corporation, which will dominate the New York area by controlling three great gas and electric combines. What does the consumer get out of all these mergers, and who is to protect him? The consumer receives almost nothing, the "inside" financiers get almost everything, and the next generation is shackled by what will soon be a virtual monopoly-control of the life blood of American industry. A case in point is the great Consolidated Gas merger (see *The Nation*, August 15, 1928), which was approved by the New York Public Service Commission over vigorous protests. This merger resulted in an increase in the corporation's dividend-rate of $7,000,000 while the consumers received nothing except the cancelation of a surcharge on coal which should have been canceled long ago. Something must be done quickly unless consumers are to be bound to pay extortionate rates to power promoters in the form of interest on mythical investments. Pending the development of a strong movement for public ownership, State commissions must be used as forums to expose the worst abuses of the industry. In New York we urge all citizens to support the Public Committee on Power in its demand that the Public Service Commission should not approve the United Corporation merger unless the consumers are protected.

IT IS OBVIOUS that a strong federal agency is needed to supervise the power industry as carefully as the Interstate Commerce Commission now supervises the railroad industry. The present Federal Power Commission has little power and not enough money to investigate properly one-half of the developments which are nominally under its authority. Meanwhile the power interests maintain a steady stream of undercover propaganda against public regulation and ownership. Testimony before the Federal Trade Commission, which has just resumed its power investigation, has now brought out the fact that the National Electric Light Association contributed $80,000 between 1924 and 1928 to the General Federation of Women's Clubs by an arrangement with its president, Mrs. John D. Sherman of Colorado. Mrs. Sherman's share came in the form of $600 paid by the power interests through an advertising agency for each of twenty-four magazine articles for which the magazines themselves paid an average of less than $10. Mrs. Sherman and the professors of various universities who acted as secret agents of the power interests while pretending to be impartial should be disciplined and repudiated by their organizations. The universities, the Association of University Professors, and the women's organizations, might take a leaf from the record of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who is making an admirable fight to induce the stockholders to cleanse the Standard Oil Company of Indiana by eliminating from its presidency Robert W. Stewart.

THERE IS SOMETHING IRONICAL in the fact that a ten-mile railroad has become the center of one of the most important economic struggles in American history. The St. Louis and O'Fallon Railway has attained this distinction because of its fight before the United States Supreme Court against the Interstate Commerce Commission's method of railroad valuation. The commission says in effect that in making railroad rates the chief item in valuation should be actual cost less depreciation; the railroad companies, represented by the St. Louis and O'Fallon, contend that the proper basis of valuation is reproduction cost less depreciation. The question is: Who will pocket the enormous unearned increment in railroad value which the American people have created by the expansion of industry and the populating of the continent? The Interstate Commerce Commission's method of valuation would give most of this surplus to the consumer. This was the method championed by the late Senator La Follette who dramatized the situation for the whole country by his historic fight against the railroad owners. Between the commission's method of valuation and the owners' method lies a capital difference for American railroads of nine billion dollars, and the consumers may be asked to pay perpetual interest on this amount in the form of railroad rates if the St. Louis and O'Fallon wins its case. The adoption of the reproduction-cost method of valuation would make the purchase of railroads and other utilities by the public almost prohibitive because it would add about thirty billion dollars to their value. Progressives can only wait for the Supreme Court's decision in this case and hope that the Holmes-Brandeis theory of law will be expressed in the majority opinion.

THE WHOLE COUNTRY has been watching the first official acts of Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt to see if he will measure up to the standard of a successful leader of the Democratic Party. Most of his progressive friends have been disappointed by the mixture of courage and caution in his first utterances. The labor program embodied in his first message to the legislature was moderately progressive and, if enacted into law, will considerably improve the status of industrial workers. He recommended an advisory minimum-wage board, the extension of workmen's compensation to occupational diseases, the prohibiting of temporary injunctions without notice of hearing, the provision for a trial by jury of alleged violators of injunctions, and a commission of experts for the study of old-age pensions. Governor Roosevelt's greatest weakness appears in his

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power program. Instead of demanding, as his predecessor did, that the power resources of the State should be developed by public authority, he hedged a little and left a large loophole for the development of power on the St. Lawrence and elsewhere by private capital under State control. If he abandons Governor Smith's fight for the actual production of power by the State, he will gravely disappoint all the progressives who voted for him. His finest official act thus far has been the appointment of Miss Frances Perkins as State Industrial Commissioner. Miss Perkins, as secretary of the Consumers League and as a member of the State Industrial Board, has been a valiant and true friend of labor.

MURDER AND MANSLAUGHTER did a thriving business in our two largest cities during 1928. In New York 337 people met death by violence. In Chicago, with a smaller population, there were 527 victims. New York records 28 convictions to date, but in 74 cases there was not even an arrest. According to our recollection, the London police accounted for every murderer during the year 1927 and for the same period the Berlin police reported the successful solution of more than 90 per cent of the capital crimes in that city. These figures speak volumes for the inefficiency of our American police. In a recent interview in the New York *Evening World,* Chief Justice Taft said rightly that the aftermath of war, which made the destruction of human life a commonplace, and the great profits to be gained by preying upon our post-war prosperity have combined to create a system of organized crime which he described as a menace to our civilization. But the solution of the problem does not lie in the hunting down of individual criminals. A campaign such as that of Commissioner Whalen in New York City, attended by unlawful destruction of property, only adds violence to violence. The truth is that organized crime is only the most flagrant example of that lust for money and disregard for laws and for human life which show themselves in the higher places of our society.

AFTER LYING LOW for several weeks, John S. Sumner of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice, has now decided that "The Well of Loneliness," a novel written by Miss Radclyffe Hall—discussed in *The Nation* for January 2—and published in America by Covici-Friede, violates the section of the penal code relating to obscene and indecent literature. On January 11, detectives raided several retail bookstores, including that of R. H. Macy and Company, seized 800 copies of the book and served summonses on the publishers. Mr. Sumner, a private citizen, and his vice society, a private organization, by some hocus-pocus seem to be in the position of guardians of public morals and commanders of the New York police. But it is interesting to note that while Mr. Sumner was making up his mind that the book was corrupting and improper, 20,000 copies were sold, and the publishers and booksellers are now in receipt of hundreds of orders sent since the announcement of the vice society's action was published in the newspapers. Thus does censorship make men and women defy the perils of obscenity! The most encouraging thing about the matter is that a committee is now being formed consisting not only of authors but of other publishers to fight the ban against the book. Messrs. Covici and Friede declare that they will take the case through the courts "as far as it can be carried." It is time that Mr. Sumner and his associates were brought out into the open and given a run for their money; meanwhile Miss Hall owes them much for free publicity.

NOR DOES THE BUSINESS of censorship stop with Mr. Sumner. Mrs. Mary Ware Dennett wrote in 1918 a pamphlet called "The Sex Side of Life: An Explanation for Young People." This document was first published in the *Medical Review of Reviews,* and the editor of that journal, in introducing it, said:

> . . . we sincerely hope that this splendid contribution will be reprinted in pamphlet form and distributed by thousands to the general public. We are tolerably familiar with Anglo-American writings on sexology, but we know nothing that equals Mrs. Dennett's brochure.

And during the eleven years since that publication, Mrs. Dennett's pamphlet has been circulated freely among the general public, being on sale publicly in bookstores, among them that of the Union Theological Seminary of New York City. A fortnight ago Mrs. Dennett was indicted for the pamphlet on complaint of the New York postal authorities under the obscenity statute and her case will come up for trial about as soon as this notice reaches our readers. Her booklet is not obscene; it is, on the contrary, sober, decent, informative, and proper in every respect. One shaft of light breaks through the clouds of censorship. In Boston a bill has been filed in the legislature by the Massachusetts Library Club, to modify the Boston law which now permits a book to be banned because of one passage in it. The amendment would provide that a book be judged as a whole, and its sponsors offer it because the present law "has provoked widespread ridicule throughout this country and abroad." Call your adversary a bad name and he is twice girded against you; laugh at him and his strength flows away like water.

THE NATIONAL AUTOMOBILE show has come and gone with, if anything, greater public interest than ever before, and with the leaders of the industry certain that the American point of saturation has not yet been reached. The two-car per family standard has, they believe, come to stay, and they point to the hardly touched export markets, despite exports of $50,737,000 in October last, to prove that there are still other worlds to conquer. Ninety per cent of the world's 30,000,000 automobiles are American made. Striking is the fact that whereas a few years ago the annual show was the excuse for doleful predictions that the supply of gasoline would disappear within a few years, no mention was made this year of that possibility—not unnaturally in the face of an oversupplied oil industry. As usual there were several new makes of cars on exhibition beside the new models among which the new five-speed transmission is beginning to make headway. The standard of motor efficiency is much higher than ever before; and the workmanship and beauty of the bodies steadily improve. The industry remains extraordinarily prosperous despite grave fluctuations in the status and welfare of the employees; its only serious difficulty is that of disposing of the cars taken in exchange for new ones. It is fully expected that whereas 4,630,000 cars were manufactured in 1928, 5,000,000 cars will have been produced long before this year ends.

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# Cruisers and Free Seas

WE print elsewhere letters from two distinguished readers who bring up the question of the freedom of the seas, that is, the safety of neutral fleets in war time, in connection with our protest against the building of any cruisers. We are glad to give to the writers a statement of our position on this important question, for we recognize that it is one of the greatest causes of friction between Great Britain and the United States and incites the naval jingoes of both sides to insist that the two countries arm against each other.

The way to remove this menace to the peace of the two countries is to invite the Government of Great Britain to send a group of representative citizens to discuss its removal with a similar group of Americans, with the stipulation that no admiral or general, or anyone remotely interested in maintaining the war system, should be a member of either delegation. The discussions of the group should be open, and every effort should be made by the representatives of the United States to meet the rising tide of public opinion in Great Britain which demands that this issue between the two countries be eliminated by a treaty. That rising demand is illustrated by the constant publication of articles on this subject in the liberal journals, by a recent book, "Freedom of the Seas," written by Commander Kenworthy and George Young, by an article in the influential *Round Table* for March, 1928, and by the attention given to the question by those Englishmen who are most interested in the League of Nations. Moreover, according to Professor James T. Shotwell, a proposal for a treaty between the United States and Great Britain has already been drawn up by specialists in international law, dealing with "the whole case for freedom of the seas in terms consonant with the Kellogg proposal" [the Peace Pact]. A joint conference would be the high road to the elimination of this cause of friction, and it is idle to deny that if we were to set out on this course with determination to succeed, all the Liberal and Labor forces of Great Britain would be mobilized to compel the British Government to meet us half way, especially if the foreign policy of the British Government should then be in the hands of Ramsay MacDonald.

That is the civilized method; the uncivilized one is to attempt to solve this question by overawing Great Britain. This effort to bluff her by building more cruisers, strikes us as altogether childish. It could conceivably drive her into a close naval alliance with France, and if that did not suffice, one with Japan. Should we then have to build cruisers and battleships enough to enable us to feel that we might whip any two or three of these allied fleets simultaneously or that we could preserve neutral rights? That is what the navalists in Washington are already talking; they are outwardly agreeing with Mr. Simonds that we must have the additional cruisers now, but they look upon the cruisers as merely a first move in a plan to spend a billion dollars and more on additional fighting ships. That way surely lies destruction.

Professor Shotwell points out in his new book, "War as an Instrument of National Policy," that the abolition of private war (defining public war as war by the nations represented in the League of Nations) as provided in the Kellogg Peace Pact, removes from the field of speculation the whole question of neutral rights. As we have repeatedly pointed out, the Peace Pact either means what it says, or it does not. If it is worthless it ought not to be passed. If it is passed it becomes a solemn covenant that ought to be accepted as such and international law molded accordingly. To build cruisers *after* its adoption is to devitalize it at the start and to stamp it with the seal of hypocrisy. Outlaw war once and for all, and the question of neutrality disappears by itself. For the United States to continue to arm, as Mr. Simonds would have it, in order to protect neutrality in a possible future war is merely to keep alive the war spirit, and to insure that rivalry in armaments between the Anglo-Saxon nations which can have only one ending—particularly if the British people should thereby be led to the belief that we of the United States are planning to starve them in the event of a war.

We confess to a feeling of dismay at finding intelligent men still believing after the lessons of the World War that force, or the menace of force, can reform anything, or end any wrong whatsoever. Wilson boasted that the trouble with the pacifists was that they did not know how to get peace, and that he did. He declared that he was going to obtain at Paris the freedom of the seas, as well as his thirteen other peace points. He got nothing. And ten years after the cessation of hostilities we are actually compelled to face the possibility of war with our chief ally because we did not obtain one of the Fourteen Peace Points! We are even told that the only way we can get that one is by making ready for war and sinking more millions of dollars in ships in order to frighten our former ally into coming to an agreement with us as to the methods of carrying on the next war on the high seas. This complete breakdown of logic and statesmanship staggers the intelligence, especially when one considers that no serious official effort has been made since the war to settle the question. It is idle to say that public opinion is not ready for a solution of this problem by discussion. Public opinion on either side of the ocean would acclaim any such move. Instead, we are told that we must build exactly fifteen more cruisers (not twenty or twenty-five or thirty but just fifteen), to exercise precisely the right amount of influence upon the expiring government of Stanley Baldwin to insure the freedom of the seas!

We confess we find it difficult to have patience with these suggestions. The world has tried the old, old way of force; it has failed to achieve anything. The true objective is not neutral rights in war-time but the abolition of war, and the first step toward that is disarmament. We cheerfully assume the risk of being denounced as mere perfectionists and idealists when we state our belief that the United States should disarm without regard to any other country's action or future neutrality, and revert to the status of real disarmament, which it so honorably held for a century of its existence. The savings that we should make—we are already spending a million dollars a day on our navy—would in a few years far offset any possible losses from the hampering of our commerce in the "next war."

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# Ask Mr. Mellon

REPRESENTATIVE GARNER of Texas is sometimes described by his associates as a "wild man," but wild men have their uses in the servile atmosphere of Washington. Mr. Garner arose the other day in the House of Representatives and delivered a smashing blow full in the face of the Mellon legend—the legend of gentle, wistful, saintly Sir Andrew brooding with a heart full of beneficence over America's perspiring millions. Mr. Mellon, in spite of his retouched photographs, is still the Pittsburgh millionaire with chilled-steel soul. The story runs as follows: At the beginning of the present session of Congress Mr. Coolidge predicted in his Message a treasury surplus of $37,000,000. On the basis of this cheerful news Congress received with kindly interest and voted one of Mr. Mellon's pet measures, the application of the Greek Government for a loan of $12,000,000. If we have a surplus, said the Congressmen, we can afford to be generous to the needy.

Within twenty-four hours after the granting of the Greek loan it became known that we are not to have any surplus at all. Mr. Coolidge's estimated surplus of $37,000,000 was made without taking into account a tax refund of $75,000,000 which the Treasury Department must make to certain corporations. Mr. Coolidge either knew nothing about the discrepancy or deliberately ignored it, and Mr. Mellon who knew all about the discrepancy looked the other way. The Greek Government, coming before Congress in its interim of deceived optimism, escaped with the desiccated pork.

This incident proves that Mr. Mellon is willing to let Congress wallow in false optimism when it suits his purposes. But the significant thing which came out of it is the revelation of the tremendous powers of Mr. Mellon in granting tax refunds to great corporations. Mr. Garner's ire and curiosity were aroused. Who, he asked, were the beneficiaries of this $75,000,000 tax refund? It happens that Mr. Mellon could not refuse that information because the Congressional Joint Committee on Internal Revenue had been given the power to look at all income-tax refunds over $75,000. When Mr. Garner revealed the refund figures, some rather startling facts stood out in relief. The United States Steel Corporation has just received a refund of $15,000,000 of its 1917 taxes with 6 per cent interest from 1917, bringing the amount to $26,000,000. Further investigation disclosed the curious fact that the Steel Corporation had already received a $31,000,000 refund for that same year, which leads to the conclusion that the Government paid back to the corporation $69,000,000 for 1917 while the corporation's total taxes for that year were only $216,000,000.

Mr. Mellon's friends declare that this unusually large refund is only a coincidence. The coincidence, however, has a curious footnote. The enormous "unjust" levy of taxes upon the United States Steel Corporation occurred in the year 1917 under the Administration of Woodrow Wilson, but the corporation waited until 1923, until a big Pennsylvania steel magnate was securely seated in the Treasury Department, before it even filed its claim for a refund. Why did the corporation wait so long to file its claim?

Let us ask other questions which are more serious. Is it true, as Mr. Garner charged on the floor of the House, that two billion dollars have been refunded by Mr. Mellon to taxpayers in eight years and that secret tax credits of several millions a year have been granted to some corporations? Why should credits be secret under the law, and tax refunds public? In this connection it should be noted that that gigantic Mellon enterprise, the Aluminum Company of America, received a public refund of $621,000, but that a credit of $655,000 received by this same company was not made public until Mr. Garner forced it into the light. Also it should be noted that Mr. Mellon refunded to the Reynolds Tobacco Company approximately $6,500,000—over the protest of L. H. Parker, expert of the Congressional joint committee, who showed why it should not be paid.

At the beginning of Mr. Mellon's term as Secretary of the Treasury these questions would not have excited public attention, but several things have occurred during that term to disturb the public's picture of Mr. Mellon as a saintly and aloof administrator of the nation's finances. Our readers will recall Senator Couzens's charge that the Bureau of Internal Revenue had tried to blackmail him into dropping his fight against its activities by bringing suit against him for $10,000,000 back taxes through a tip furnished by the ineffable "Jim" Watson, the coming Republican leader of the Senate. The results justified Mr. Couzens's charge, for the Treasury Department not only failed in its attempt to prove that Senator Couzens owed back taxes on the sale of his Ford stock but it formally admitted another tax mistake recently by mailing him a check for $989,000. We believe, in view of all this, that Mr. Garner is justified in demanding a Congressional investigation of all the tax refunds if only because more than two and one-half billions of dollars have been returned to taxpayers since 1923.

# Henry Arthur Jones

WHEN BERNARD SHAW became dramatic critic of the *Saturday Review* it was his avowed intention to defend the "new drama" of England. Very soon, as he confessed later, he was appalled to discover that there wasn't any—and he took to writing plays himself in order to supply some examples of the sort of thing which he had undertaken to champion. In the meantime, however, it was necessary to pretend that the "new drama" was something more than a figment of his imagination and in his extremity he seized upon the mildly didactic plays of Henry Arthur Jones. Thus began a rather unreal alliance between the two men which went upon the rocks after the war and which has ended now with the death of Jones at the age of seventy-seven.

A farmer's son and with only an irregular education, Jones began to compose plays before he had ever attended a theatrical performance, and being, unlike Shaw, first and foremost a man of the theater, he drifted into writing the "play of ideas," not primarily because he had ideas to express, but because ideas could be made the bases of a drama. In 1885, long before Ibsen had been heard of in England, Jones's "Saints and Sinners" created a mild sensation because it dealt with religious matters, and even when, ten to fifteen years later, "Michael and His Lost Angel,"

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"The Liars," and "Mrs. Dane's Defense" were highly successful examples of the "social drama" it is probable that their author had less in common with the eager protagonists of "new ideas" than they liked to imagine. Like Pinero he was obsessed with the idea of the woman with a past, and though he handled the subject in a very gingerly fashion the mere fact that he handled it at all was sufficient to link him with the rebels. But in the days when Shaw was still an outcast Jones was a successful practitioner of the social drama. The "advanced thinkers" who found the former far too advanced for their taste rallied around him and for years his reputation and his "sanity" were used as foils to emphasize the divagations of the Irish irrepressible. Some of his admirers used a dangerous argument to prove his superiority. He drew audiences, they said, while Shaw did not, and the test of dramatic worth is success in the theater.

Gradually, however, the roles were reversed. His popularity dwindled while that of his rival grew. By the test which his champions had themselves proposed he was defeated and his plays disappeared from the stages which still revived the older comedies of Shaw with success. Then the war came and Jones threw in his lot with the ultra-conservatives. When it was over he began to engage in acrimonious controversy with his former friends and he developed a severe case of Bolshiphobia, setting it down in "Who's Who" that "hunting sedition" was his favorite recreation. He had given up the drama some years before, and though he created some interest with his protesting letters entitled "My Dear Wells" he gradually declined from his place as leading British dramatist into that of a respected but unread author. Had England had an Academy he would certainly have been elected a member, and there was no one to deny him the right to be called "Dean" of playwrights. Unfortunately, however, that title is seldom bestowed upon any except those to whom no more meaningful honorific seems appropriate.

Just a little over a year ago "Mrs. Dane's Defense" was revived briefly and unsuccessfully in New York. No other revival has been attempted here since, and to see that performance was to realize that its author's point of view has become hopelessly dated since a looser age cannot possibly take his problems very seriously. This particular play reaches its conclusion when the *raisonneur* of the piece, having discovered that many years before Mrs. Dane fell from grace, shows her the door. He explains that he would be glad at any time to help her in her distress. He wishes, he adds, that he might allow her to retain her place in respectable society. But an immutable law of God which he is not able to change proclaims that the woman who has sinned may be forgiven but can never hope to be permitted to mingle with respectable members of her sex again. To many of the author's contemporaries this appeared to be a sensibly enlightened doctrine; to our generation it seems, however, that Mr. Jones is saying something like this: "The repentant Magdalen may reasonably hope that she has been washed clean enough to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but the morals of the vicar's tea table are more exacting."

No English dramatist who flourished at any time during the hundred and some odd years which lie between Sheridan and Wilde has survived. It is not likely that any except Shaw and Wilde himself will be long remembered from among those who have written since.

# Genius and Music

YEHUDI MENUHIN, the eleven-year-old virtuoso, has made his second appearance in the East, and has again aroused the enthusiasm of the public and the critics. Not that his performances were technically as satisfactory as before. Whether because of his recent use of a full-sized violin, or for some other reason, there were occasional, but quite noticeable, slips. None the less he played with amazing dash and fervor, power and brilliancy, with a maturity of interpretation and a beauty of tone that were astonishing. To hear him is a not-to-be-forgotten experience. More than that, it is plain that, given adequate training from now on, Yehudi Menuhin should go as far as any living artist. Thus we have another gratifying proof that, despite this mechanistic and materialistic age, genius is still to be looked for and in entirely unexpected quarters. This time the divine lightning struck in San Francisco. It singled out a simple Jewish family, the heads of which, while musical, were not musicians. Upon their shoulders has been placed the almost terrifying responsibility of bringing to complete maturity and fruition this extraordinary child.

But if we have this highly gratifying proof that the crass materialism of this age has not yet deprived us of the possibility of interpretative talent of the highest order, the case is not so clear for creative musical genius. Where is there a composer who has arisen since the war to take a position comparable to that already awarded to this eleven-year-old prodigy on the concert stage? There are some whose furious sounds have found a temporary acceptance and others whose promise is yet to be fulfilled. But the fact is that not since the rise of the great Russian group has there come to the front a composer to take his place at once among the accepted of our best programs. In this country, we have the promise and the achievements of Ernest Bloch, George Gershwin, and Deems Taylor, especially the last, whose "The King's Henchmen" won a favorable reception. But one successful opera does not make a great composer; so the critics await Mr. Taylor's second music drama which the Metropolitan Opera has commissioned him to write.

If we look abroad, there are a couple of promising composers in Italy and there are reports of profound musical stirring in Russia. Nowhere else is there anything to report that even suggests the arrival of a great star in the creative musical firmament. The recent Schubert competition brought forth only a somewhat melodious symphony which the composer apparently admits is made up of plagiarisms. Out of the welter of the war has come—nothing; out of the spiritual and physical anguish of the defeated has arisen—nobody. It has been the belief that great music was certain to come out of a suffering or enslaved people—witness our Negro spirituals and the great Russian composers in the last decades of Czardom. The world badly needs proof that national unhappiness may still find its expression in musical creation; badly needs the appearance in some attic of another Schubert, or Beethoven, or Tchaikovsky—to prove that all the creative talent in the world is not going into literature or architecture, science or our industrial structure.

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# It Seems to Heywood Broun

THROUGH the courtesy of a former pugilistic champion, I am in possession of an elastic exerciser and a pair of dumb-bells. With the apparatus is a letter signed by the champion himself. "The difficulties that come to any man in his laudable endeavors to attain proper physical condition move me deeply," he writes. "I want to offer you an opportunity to train in a scientific manner. I am sending you an enrolment blank, the first lesson, and my special exercising apparatus. Please fill out all the questions carefully so I will know how to handle your case. These patent interlocking dumb-bells will be of great service to you. The handgrip will so increase the strength of your fingers and your wrists that you will never get tired in pasting up contributions to your column."

I don't believe I will take the course for there would be no sense in getting thin merely by following the directions supplied by another. The whole point in reducing is the subsequent satisfaction of swaggering around and telling people precisely how you did it. Reduction should be a creative effort and, as such, wholly original.

Besides I can't answer with complete accuracy all the sections of the questionnaire. For instance I find: "Is your memory strong or weak?" The blank gives me an opportunity to reply with only just one word. The problem is not as simple as all that. I don't remember all the capitals of the States nor yet the principal cities, but usually I know how many cards the dealer drew and in other sports I generally am right about the number of trumps which are still out. Things which are of interest I remember pretty well, but on occasion I have managed to forget the precise afternoon upon which some magazine went to press. Is this strength or weakness? Who can tell this side of Judgment Day?

I am puzzled, too, by the interrogation: "Any blood pressure?" The proper answer to that I suppose is, "I sincerely hope so." The implications of blood pressure have always been a little mystifying to me. I know that it is bad to have it over high and not much better to sink below a certain limit. These limits vary according to the doctor and the individual. I well remember a jovial friend who was warned to live more carefully on account of mounting pressure and yet a few days later I saw him in a condition not quite abstemious. "Oh, that's all right," he said in answer to my protest. "Don't worry about my blood pressure. The doctor says it isn't really bad until it hits two hundred and thirty and at the last examination I was only two hundred and twenty-five."

Also, I am puzzled by people who speak about their blood pressure as if it were fixed and constant as the stars. That I know for a delusion. Not so many months ago I consulted a physician who shook his head a little gravely and said, "Too low. Oh, much too low."

"What is my pressure?" I inquired anxiously.

"It's just a hundred," he answered with deep melancholy. I felt that his frightened look was fully justified. Many times I had heard that a normal person's pressure should be his age plus a hundred. This reading left me zero years of age and I was really quite a little older. Should it by any chance fall still farther I would be out of existence entirely and back in Babylon a king or rather more likely a Christian slave. Forthwith I rode crosstown and was examined by another who caught me at one hundred and forty-five which seemed to him a shade too high.

The next question on the exercise chart is searching. "Do you worry?" the maestro wants to know.

Well, I imagine that I do, nor have I any faith that the dumb-bells and the elastic exerciser will wholly cure me of the habit. I'm not even certain that I want to be cured. If I were bereft of the ability to worry I might say to myself: "What's the point of doing a piece for *The Nation* today? The worst thing that can happen to me is to get fired. What of that? I've been fired before." And then I would get up from the typewriter and go back to bed leaving myself and literature just so much poorer.

In fact I know that there is nothing in the implication of the circular that worry can be reduced by playing about with dumb-bells. I've tried it. It was after two when the managing editor of this magazine called me up and said, "What about your copy?" Already the hour was late and I confess I found myself distinctly worried. "If I don't get to work immediately," I told myself, "this message will never make the issue."

But instead of buckling down upon the instant I decided to give the elastic exerciser a fair trial in order to see if it were capable of reducing both waistline and worry. For fifteen minutes I imagined myself the stroke oar of a winning Harvard crew and pulled and pulled away in triumph down the Thames. But when I looked at the clock again the deadline was just fifteen minutes closer and my worry instead of having diminished was much increased. Madly I tossed the dumb-bells about for another quarter of an hour and then the telephone rang sharply and I knew the buzz for that of an angry and impatient *Nation*. There is no solace in physical exertion when mental effort is the requirement of the hour. I feel as badly off as Sheridan when he was twenty miles away, for I have only as many minutes now to finish this survey of life and letters.

"Mind drowsy or wander?" says the inquiring trainer on his leaflet. I am inclined to make my affirmation contentious. The only hope any journalist has of turning out satisfactory copy on occasion lies in the blessed chance that upon some certain afternoon his thoughts will venture off into unbeaten tracks. Or at any rate down some road which is not pocked with the footprints of every newspaper hack, himself included.

And there is drowsiness; that's not a boon to be lightly shuffled off by antics with exercising apparatus. Who would call back the sheep he counted as they leaped the phantom fences? Good riddance to these woolly ones, for lucky is the tired man who can count them and the world well lost. However, I no longer find it necessary to tabulate cattle in order to win repose. Instead I turn to newspapers and read the daily Grover Whalen statement.

HEYWOOD BROUN

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# Witches Win in York

By DUDLEY NICHOLS

IN the pleasant Susquehanna Valley of Pennsylvania in the summer of 1927 the city of York determined, in the language of its Chamber of Commerce, to put itself on the map. The behemoth Philadelphia had had its sesquicentennial. But had not the Continental Congress, when the behemoth fell in the way of attack, moved on to York and sat there from September, 1777, until the following June? The old state house which had stood on the square had vanished but at least there remained the memorial name, Continental Square. Accordingly York held its own sesqui, invited Congressmen to make resounding speeches, engineered parades and processions, and hoped that all this would put the place on the map. How far this noise carried must be left to the judgment of remote readers.

But after it was all over and the bass drums had been put away and the bunting taken down, at the tail end of the year, on Thanksgiving Day to be precise, a farmer some twenty miles down the Susquehanna Trail heard his neighbor's cattle lowing, and going cross fields to investigate found the stock unfed and his neighbor lying dead and charred on the kitchen floor of his solitary frame house.

York, which had invoked the limelight, all of a sudden found itself in too much limelight. Rural murders are no great shakes as the news goes, but this crime was to bring to light a medieval cloud of darkness which hangs over the country of the Pennsylvania Dutch, those fine, thrifty, devout farm-folk, a cloud which nobody had ever effectively pointed out before and which had been dispersed, so people thought, from the United States by the double light of common sense and science. That a witch had been murdered did not astonish the people to any great degree. The local newsmen sent out stories to the metropolitan papers for whom they act as correspondents, but the metropolitan editors did not rise like hungry trout. People in the cities read the stories and laid the papers aside. The writer suspects that the real detonator of the ensuing publicity was William Bolitho of the New York *World,* who devoted a column to witchcraft and told what London editors would have done with such an opportunity. Bolitho has not been publicly indicted by the York Chamber of Commerce, but then the higher-ups invariably escape.

Within the next few days the town was marched upon by hordes of reporters from Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, and other cities, and though York first rejoiced at this countrywide attention the community soon began to wince when the stories and editorials came back in the mail.

York had never wrung its hands over the widespread belief in powwowism and witchcraft, in demons and devils, because things had never been different. Supernatural beliefs were as natural an inheritance to the community's psychology as the vermiform appendix to the human body. After all, there was a good deal to be said for the citizenry: He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone. Astrology flourishes not five minutes from Broadway. The broken mirror, the horseshoe, number thirteen, the third light, spilled salt, black cats crossing your way, going under ladders—we all have trivial legacies from the dark past, rejected by reason but retained by mind. Superstition is the mark of an imaginative, if not enlightened, people, and by the very etymology of the word we see how absolutely it is identified with the vital part of religions.

But York was horrified by the city reporters. Every small locality is sacred to its own reporters. Accustomed to that veneration the people were aghast at the effrontery of the aliens. Mayor Jacob Weaver was interviewed and quoted by a New York reporter as complaining that "you people don't know the difference between black magic and white magic, between witchcraft and powwowing." The writer found a general tendency to cry down witchcraft, whatever reservations the citizens made in their own minds, and to speak up faintly for powwowing. Even the countryfolk, the most obfuscated, shook their heads at mention of witchcraft and generally said, "That's devil work, we don't have anything to do with the work of the devils," though by such replies they indicated a private credence in the existence of warlocks and witches.

Here were the facts. In York, an amazingly prosperous and tidy city of nearly fifty thousand population, a city with seventy churches and a million-dollar high school, the third city in the State in the diversity of its manufacturing interests, and a city which is not wanting in its proper proportion of speakeasies, here in York were at the fairest estimate a hundred powwows openly practicing. And in the rural parts of York and adjoining counties are a hundred more.

York County has 150,000 people, Berks 200,000, and Bucks 120,000. The editor of a local paper is my authority for the statement that in these three Pennsylvania Dutch counties there are thousands of believers in powwow. The very word has a miraculous sound; it is a hang-over from Indian days.

And in the powwow one finds a ligature between black and white magic. Their methods are as various as minds. One will tell a simple-minded fellow he is bewitched, he is hexed, has a spell put on him. Hex is both verb and noun, and the word betrays the German immigration of the belief, "hexenbesen" being nothing more than the familiar witch's besom which jaded illustrators perennially draw against the moon for November magazine covers. Anybody in York can give you names of powwows and the authorities could rake them all in, in no time. Some are mountebanks and rich, some are self-deceived and poor. The richest powwow in York is "Doc" Lenhart, who is said to receive as much as $50 for a treatment and whose home is one of the showplaces of the town. Another powwow of great respect is known to carry a gun and is feared by his enemies. Gun-toting is permissible in York, it seems.

A newspaper woman went to a powwow woman of the self-deluded type and was received by night in a small lamp-lighted room.

"Take off your clothes," said the powwow, a poor shrunken creature with zealous eyes. "Don't be afraid"—

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in answer to a look of doubt—"I'm going to cure you."

She laid the patient on a bed, and taking a string began to "measure her," stretching the string from crown to heel three times, and then running the three body-lengths over the length of the foot. When the division of the foot-length into the string-length did not come out evenly, the powwow told her patient she had "opnemma."

"What is that?"—in a frightened voice.

"It's the from-takin'."

"What do you mean?"

"It's the takin'-off. The skin's too tight acrost the chest."

There was no sense to be got out of this, and the visitor donned her clothing and paid her "gift" of a dollar. The law keeps powwows from taking "fees." Later the same woman visited a rich powwow, but did not go through with the treatment when he began to blow down her dress and lay his hands upon her in an offensive manner. Nearly all of the early brigade of reporters visited powwows and all came away with similar yarns.

The county medical society appointed a committee to investigate powwow, but no action has ever been taken. There is a persistent rumor that one of the medical members is a believer. The clergy announced that on a certain Sunday all would preach against the dark powers. A visit that day to the Blymyer church at Blymyer Valley, the cradle of the witch-killer who had set the whole thing going, found the pastor omitting mention of witchcraft or powwow and preaching on Lazarus and the miracles of Christ.

Indeed witchcraft is a sore problem for the church. It must be a sore problem for fundamentalists and Bible literalists everywhere. What would John Roach Straton say of the matter? Does not Exodus 22:18 say, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live"; did not Saul betake himself to a witch, or a woman with a familiar spirit? The introduction to "Malleus Maleficarum," that terrific volume of the fifteenth century which has only just been translated into English, begins by saying: "It has been recognized even from the very earliest times . . . that witchcraft is an evil thing, an enemy to light, an ally of the powers of darkness, disruption, and decay," and the whole aim of the book, which first treats of "the three necessary concomitants of witchcraft, which are the Devil, a witch, and the permission of Almighty God," is to prevent the existence of witches from being denied, in order that the church's inquisitors may not be hindered by the secular authority in finding and punishing witches.

Times have changed: in earlier days it was denial of witchcraft that stirred the storm, today it is belief. A parson attending the witchcraft trials, pastor of the Church of God at a small town near by, told of his continual and mighty combats of "the Book of Books" against the black books of the witches and powwows. For they have their books, "The Long Lost Friend" and the "Seven Books of Moses." . . . Strange reading: "Tie the heart of a bat with a red silken string to the right arm, and you will win every game at cards you play."

And at front and back of "The Long Lost Friend" is this cross-guarded verbal charm: "Whoever carries this book with him is safe from all his enemies, visible or invisible; and whoever has this book with him cannot die without the holy corpse of Jesus Christ, nor be drowned in any water, nor burn up in any fire, nor can any unjust sentence be passed upon him."

In a town twenty miles from York there was many years ago a woman who taught in the public schools. Now Mrs. Kopp, or Mother Noll as she is known, is old and witch-like and feared for her powers. No wonder witchhood is desirable. Old people are usually powerless, humbled, and ignored by the strong. But age is the very mark and strength of the witch.

When John Blymyer, a gentle, mild, inoffensive cigar-maker of thirty-three who six years ago escaped from the State insane asylum and never was returned, was put on trial for the murder of Nelson Rehmeyer, a farmer powwow, on November 27, he went to the witness-stand and with an intense sincerity and childlike candor told details of his wretched, sickly, persecution-haunted life. Obviously a psychopath, he told of successive visits for ten years to York powwows, paying out his five and ten dollars per visit, and receiving in return the statement that he was bewitched. Somebody had put a hex on him. The cumulative evidence was indisputable, he was wasting away, slowly dying, because of the spell. He took money to Mother Noll in Marietta and was told the witch's name, Nelson Rehmeyer. The female witch gave further proof: she took a dollar bill from the palm of his hand, told him to look in the palm of his hand, and there he saw Rehmeyer staring at him balefully, right in the palm of his hand.

There were two ways to break the spell: get Rehmeyer's "book" or take from his head a lock of hair and "bury it eight foot underground." Theft of the witch's powers or symbolical murder and burial.

Blymyer feared Rehmeyer physically. Also he feared him as a witch, for apparently the sixty-year-old farmer was as cracked on witchcraft as Blymyer himself. The cigar-maker recruited two boys. John Curry, a fourteen-year-old Tom Sawyer, "wanted to see some of this witchcraft performed." Wilbert Hess, eighteen, was told to go along by his father and mother, who believed Blymyer when he told them they also were hexed by Rehmeyer. Blymyer set out to save his life, Hess to save his parents from the powers of darkness, and John Curry to satisfy his inflamed curiosity. . . . And then, at the fatal moment, fear blazed blackly in the rabbit-hearted psychopath and he did what all fear-stricken people will do, struck in a panic. The terrified boys were sucked into the spouting flame of murder in a moment and in a short time the witch lay dead on his kitchen floor. Horrified, they tried like the juveniles they were to get rid of the gruesome evidence by arson, but failed like juveniles. And two days later, on Thanksgiving, the unfed stock in Rehmeyer's barn drew discovery of the crime, and a few hours later of the culprits.

Never did a community, which had so elaborately besought the limelight, so try to escape light when it came in another fashion. Under the guise of preserving an orderly trial the judges did their best to exclude representatives of metropolitan papers. All authorities collaborated to rush the trial through at vertiginous speed. John Curry's whole trial took hardly more than a day. The York courthouse did the fastest washing of hands that has ever come to the writer's attention. Mayor Weaver called in news photographers, called them rascals and hoodlums, and told them the next man who walked down the street with a camera

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would be thrown into the "cooler." And the commonwealth, represented by District Attorney Amos Herrmann, fell into complete oblivion of the underlying facts of the case.

The prevalent belief in the powers of darkness is merely a matter for disclosure, not invective. But there is something more contemptible than medieval darkness and that is the flagrant injustice which in the opinion of the writer attended the witchcraft trials in consequence of the commonwealth's smug determination not to recognize any such stigma upon York County as widespread witchcraft and powwowing. The commonwealth in the person of District Attorney Amos Herrmann, buried its head in the sand of self-righteousness against the powers of darkness, and refused to allow to the jury that there was any motive behind the inadvertent crime except plunder, as represented in the dollar apiece the three spell-breakers carried off after ransacking Rehmeyer's house for "the book." Blymyer and Curry were sentenced to prison for life, Hess to from ten to twenty years.

That position of the commonwealth amounted to suppression of the real facts. And Blymyer, victim of York County's medievalism and the sad circumstances of life, who belongs in the asylum from which he escaped, and Blymyer's two boy victims, became in turn the victims of a pharisaical society. The slain man, Rehmeyer, was a sacrifice to the powers of darkness, while the three boys (Blymyer has a mental age of eight) were sacrificed to the commonwealth's smug self-righteousness and respectability, and there is not a straw to choose between the two bloody idols. It is an ancient story: scapegoats, like witches, are written into the Bible.

# Tips from the Mayflower

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

*Washington, D. C., January 12*

DON'T let anyone tell you that Herbert Hoover isn't feeling his oats. He maintained a censorship on all news dispatches filed from the battleships Maryland and Utah during the trip to South America and return. In order to have an expert censor, with war-time experience, he took along his intimate friend, George Barr Baker. The twenty correspondents on board were required to submit all their stories to Baker, and nothing could be sent until it had received Baker's written O.K. Passages were deleted, dispatches were held back, changes were "suggested" to the writers, and broad hints were conveyed that it would be better to leave certain subjects alone. The facts were fully disclosed when the correspondents returned to Washington, and were freely acknowledged and boldly defended by officials of the Hoover party. Why they were not disclosed earlier, and why they aroused so little resentment when they were disclosed, may eventually be answered by whoever solves the riddle: "What has become of the independence and courage of American newspapers?" The only explanation available thus far is that reporters, like other men, have to think of their own bread and butter, and that editors and owners have found it more pleasant—and profitable—not to antagonize the head of the national government, especially when he is sensitive to criticism and excessively fond of having his own way.

* * * * *

THE censorship was officially described in Baker's bulletins on board ship as "the O. K. system." The defense subsequently offered for it by Mr. Hoover's representatives was a lesson in sophistry and—I fear—a pattern of what is to be expected in the future. It went something like this: The reporters were present at Hoover's invitation and hence were semi-official members of the mission. As such, they were responsible to the head of the mission, and he was responsible for their conduct, and it was his duty to prevent them from doing anything which might defeat the purpose of the mission. Whether anyone actually succeeded in intoxicating himself with this wordy vapor, I cannot say. Ethical questions assume strange forms in the brain of an engineer. What happened is obvious enough: Reporters assigned to cover a story were compelled to submit their copy to a private interloper who was clothed with the power to alter or kill it. And this in peace time. Two months ago I forecast in *The Nation* that we were in for four years of a White House Spokesman who would be testier and more intolerant of criticism than his predecessor. But I did not dream that the prophecy would be so soon and so startlingly fulfilled. We *are* in for it.

* * * * *

AND speaking of spokesmen—a few days ago the chairman of the Republican National Committee, the ineffable and sometimes incredible Dr. Work, issued a formal statement "deploring" certain publicity which had been given to prospective Cabinet appointments and to the future handling of political patronage. It should be interesting to learn that the publicity which the Doctor so earnestly "deplored" was based on statements voluntarily made by him to a group of newspapermen several days earlier. He told them that Mrs. Alvin T. Hert was entitled to a place in the Hoover Cabinet; that the National Committee in future would have a larger voice in patronage distribution and a greater influence upon public affairs; and that the campaign for the re-election of Herbert Hoover in 1932 was to be launched at once. According to the unanimous testimony of the others present, the statements were made and accepted with the understanding that they could be published, but that their author could not be quoted. This was done. There came the inevitable flareback from Capitol Hill and the returning Utah, and soon Dr. Work was publicly "deploring" that any such publicity should have occurred. This is the Spokesman System in its finest flower. Some day, perhaps, the newspapermen of Washington will meet and resolve never again to print the statements of public men who are unwilling to be quoted. If it ever happens, it will be a good day for press and public.

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HOUR after hour a steady stream of callers pours into the expansive Hoover suite at the Mayflower Hotel, and day after day a steady stream of "inside tips" on the composition of the next Cabinet pours out. Sly George Moses whispers to his journalistic friends to "lay off" the prediction that there will be an extra session of Congress, and Senator Borah and Representative Hawley assure them with equal confidential positiveness that an extra session is "inevitable." Among the numerous whispers, one which receives unusual credence is that Colonel "Wild Bill" Donovan, once the trusted subordinate of Harry M. Daugherty but more recently the trusted adviser of Mr. Hoover, is not to be the next Attorney-General after all. The most preposterous reason advanced in support of this hypothesis is that Colonel Donovan is a Catholic and the Klan is opposed to him. As a matter of fact, the circumstance that he is a Catholic and that the Klan is opposing him is the strongest element in his favor. It is politically imperative that there shall be a Catholic in the Hoover Cabinet, and a widely advertised fight on Donovan by the Klan is the one thing which might force Hoover to appoint him. The real opposition to Donovan rests on far sounder grounds—his part in the notorious blackmailing prosecution of Senator Wheeler of Montana four years ago.

* * * * *

THE prosecution of Senator Wheeler, it will be recalled, was in reprisal for his exposure of Daugherty and the Ohio Gang. The circumstances under which he was indicted were thoroughly investigated by a Senate committee, and the indictment was exposed as one of the most brazen and high-handed frame-ups ever attempted against a public man. The chairman of that committee was Senator Borah —who is entitled to some influence with the President-elect. After the scandalous character of the prosecution had been fully disclosed, it was Assistant Attorney-General Donovan who insisted that it be carried on, and it was carried on—until a jury made short work of it. It is this record, and not his religion, which constitutes the greatest obstacle to the Colonel's ambition. If his name should be sent to the Senate it is almost certain that the fight against his confirmation would be led by the most celebrated Catholic in the Chamber—Senator Walsh of Montana.

* * * * *

ANOTHER interesting whisper issuing from the Mayflower is that the Greatest Secretary of the Treasury since Carter Glass is not so certain of reappointment as has universally been assumed. Notwithstanding that Mr. Mellon has displayed an almost pathetic eagerness to stay on, Mr. Hoover thus far has suffered him to remain in a state of public, palpitating uncertainty; which seems rather unclubby when one remembers that they were Cabinet colleagues way back in the good old Harding days. The vital factor seems to be Mr. Mellon's age, and some of his friends are openly apprehensive that Hoover considers the Secretary of the Treasury too advanced in years to embark on another term. This writer wants to be among the first to repudiate such a suggestion. Whatever Mr. Mellon's age may be, his powers are unimpaired. The positively youthful gusto with which he continues to hand millions of dollars back to the steel trust, the aluminum trust, and other great corporations in the form of tax rebates almost every other day should dispel any doubts concerning his vigor and resoluteness. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to know just what *is* Mr. Mellon's age. Examination of the statistics reveals some puzzling discrepancies. In "Who's Who" for 1918-1919, issued shortly before Mr. Mellon entered public office, the year of his birth is given as 1852. But the same publication for 1922-1923, issued as he was approaching the end of his first term, gives the year as 1854, and the Congressional Directory of January, 1927, gives it as 1855!

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THE Senate has just passed through another episode involving forged documents. It develops that the committee which a year ago investigated and exposed the spurious documents published in the Hearst newspapers (in which a clumsy effort was made to show that Senators Borah, Norris, La Follette, and Heflin had been receiving money from the Mexican Government), received from a different source another set of forgeries, which attempted even more clumsily to make it appear that Borah and Norris had each got $100,000 from the Soviet Government, and that Borah in addition had got $100,000 from the Mexican Government. The plot involved in the "Soviet" documents was extremely thin. It appears to have been a plain case of fabricating bogus documents in the hope of selling them, a conclusion amply supported by the fact that the owner of the "originals" offered them for sale at the modest price of $50,000. However, the new Mexican document involving Borah's name had a more interesting history. It appears to have been brought to this country by George Barr Baker—the same George Barr Baker who acted as official Hoover censor on the South American trip. Apparently his purpose was to publish it, but the State Department got it away from him—"with some difficulty," one of its officials testified. Under-Secretary Olds destroyed it. Mr. Olds was before the committee at one time, but the committee had not then ascertained the history of the document or what happened to it—and Mr. Olds failed to tell. Subsequent disclosures so strongly emphasized his lack of frankness that even the ultra-conservative Senator Reed of Pennsylvania expressed a wrathful desire to have Mr. Olds back on the witness stand. But, alas, he had left the State Department to take employment as representative of a New York legal firm, with his office in Paris. The committee has asked to be discharged, but as this is written there is a determination elsewhere in the Senate to have additional explanations from Mr. Baker, and there is criticism of the committee for its failure to utter one word of condemnation of William Randolph Hearst for publishing defamatory documents which, as he admitted on the stand, he did not believe when he published.

* * * * *

THE cruiser bill still encounters rough weather, and its prospects are perhaps less favorable than a fortnight ago. It is likely that not more than ten cruisers will be authorized—if that many—and that the time for laying them down will be left open. Senator Hale of Maine, who is in charge of the bill, may not deserve Senator Jim Reed's derisive fling ("This is the first time the American navy has ever been led by a rowboat"), but his leadership is conspicuously feeble, which is always an important factor in a Senate fight.

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# Wall Street and the Federal Reserve

By MERRYLE STANLEY RUKEYSER

IN drawing up the Federal Reserve Act, the framers showed profound, if unintended, wisdom in creating a central board as a symbol of the national banking power. The Federal Reserve Board, which in practice is little more than a rubber stamp for the operating regional banks, has been set aside as a goat in times of stress and tension. Like a lightning rod, the board draws the wrath of a disgruntled public, and spares the banks whose operations might be adversely affected if they were placed directly under a barrage of political fire.

It is popular to attack the board, which presumably is unprotected either by the law of libel or the Marquis of Queensberry rules of the prize ring. Radicals and reactionaries, members of the Farm Bloc and the editor of the *Wall Street Journal,* granges in the West and the New York *Journal of Commerce,* and even the sedate *Commercial and Financial Chronicle,* join in the chorus of lamentation over the alleged deficiency of the Federal Reserve Board in respect to intelligence and courage.

After the comparatively recent retirement of D. R. Crissinger, the political economist from Marion, Ohio, President Coolidge looked for a man of larger stature—a comparatively easy task. He brought in as governor of the Federal Reserve Board Roy A. Young, who had formerly been head of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis. Mr. Young was soon characterized by an acid journalist as the hand-shaker of the Federal Reserve system. In introducing geniality into a hostile world Mr. Young has served a useful purpose. He has done more than that. He has also made a sincere effort to serve as social interpreter of the Federal Reserve system, and in his speech before the Indiana Bankers Association last fall he set a fine precedent in bold and candid disclosure of policy.

But irrespective of personnel, the board—like central banks—is not destined to be loved. By making credit cheaper or dearer, it is perpetually in the nature of things tending to add to the prosperity of some groups and to detract from that of others. The average business man or banker, whose own interests are temporarily side-tracked, lacks the detachment necessary to approve a current Federal Reserve policy because of its academic excellence or symmetry. Much of the criticism of the Federal Reserve system, which includes the twelve regional banks as well as the coordinating board at Washington consisting of Presidential appointees, is mutually contradictory. For example, the system is attacked, on the one hand, for exercising dictatorial authority in causing or stopping waves of prosperity and bull markets, and, on the other, is criticized for weakness in functioning with a sword of lead instead of a sword of steel. Furthermore. it has been widely criticized—even by Senator Carter Glass of Virginia, coauthor of the Federal Reserve Act—for opening the floodgates of the credit reservoir to the stock market. And, on the other hand, threatening crank letters have reached a new high record during the last year, when amateurs complained that restrictive Federal Reserve policy shook their marginal holdings from them and dumped them into the laps of canny financiers at bargain prices.

Any objective observer who sought to whitewash the board of all mistakes of commission and of omission would be strangely lacking in a sense of candor and of reality. For the board has functioned by the method of trial and error which entailed misses as well as hits. But, despite the frequent delays in adopting corrective methods, and other blunders, the Federal Reserve has contributed to the post-war stability of American finance and trade. The record of the system, though far from blameless, is a step toward the application of the technique of civilization to the realm of barter and trade. It is a maneuver to inject rationality into finance; to substitute coordinated activity for the prewar anarchy that prevailed in the work-a-day world. It set up machinery for dealing with the economic system as a whole instead of piecemeal, as profit-making institutions do. It has proved a useful cohesive force in enabling banking and corporation leaders to make the most of their opportunities. It has, however, proved a bitter disappointment to those who looked upon it as an instrument for social reform, or as a means of upsetting the balance of economic power, which centered in Wall Street. The real power in the system lies in the boards of directors of regional banks, two-thirds of the members of which are nominated by member banks from among the leading bankers and business men of the community. Federal Reserve policy is determined by men who are satisfied with the general economic scheme, and are eager only to keep the machine of business well lubricated and free of excess friction.

No wonder that those who saw in the Federal Reserve Act an avenue to the "new freedom" which would relieve the country of the money power of Wall Street are disappointed. Under the Federal Reserve system, Wall Street has risen from a national financial center to the world's monetary capital.

Even the conservative Mr. Glass, who expected so much from the Federal Reserve Act, has recently confessed disillusionment. Like woman suffrage, the banking reform failed to usher in the millennium! Senator Glass, referring to the rise in brokers' loans to unprecedented peaks, points out in the *United States Banker:*

> The fact remains, too—and it ought to be emphasized in red letters—that whether dangerous for the moment or not, this sucking in of the country's resources for use in gambling in stocks and bonds, without regard to the need for money in legitimate industry, is precisely the sort of thing the Federal Reserve Act was designed to prevent, or at least to minimize.
>
> . . . Whatever the cause or the remedy, the fact remains that, in one sense, we are back again just where we were in 1913. We still have gigantic stock and bond operations involving billions of capital. We still see funds drawn from the channels of legitimate business to finance these operations. We still feel the harrying and disturbing effects of their wild fluctuations in value, effects none the less real even though, as is sometimes claimed, they are

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merely psychological in character. The Federal Reserve system has not removed from the American scene the business of incessant and often hectic gambling in the securities of the enterprises by which the nation's most vital activities are carried on; and because it has not, one of the chief objects of its enactment remains to be achieved.

There is more than a possibility that the people of the United States may find it necessary to overhaul the whole conduct of the Federal Reserve System, and see where it has come to in a decade and a half of actual operation.

For the sake of the record, it should be repeated that the real power is vested in the directors of Federal Reserve Banks, whom Senator Glass expected like modern knights to battle against the evils of the world of business and finance. And yet these directors consist of outstanding men in the very realm that Mr. Glass and others are seeking to reform. Among the directors of the New York Federal Reserve Bank —estimable men—are the head of an outstanding Wall Street bank, which is closely allied with the security market, the presidents of two smaller up-State banks, and five leading industrialists. These men cannot be expected to follow one set of ideals in their own offices and another when they enter the board room of the quasi-public Federal Reserve Bank. Specifically they cannot be expected to sell their own securities to bankers in their private capacity, and in their public capacity as Reserve Bank directors be expected to rule that transactions in securities are wicked.

As a matter of fact, the rotation in office of Reserve Bank directors makes it difficult to build up a set of Federal Reserve traditions. In its amateur phases, the vesting of power in such men resembles the jury system. In the German Reichsbank, power is vested in the governor and his administrative officers. In the Bank of France, the council is composed of men long trained in the service, and in the Bank of England tradition is respected by men who serve for long periods. In 1913 Congress compromised. It was afraid to set up a new central bank, of which the rural hinterland was suspicious, and yet it perceived the need of central banking. As a result, the unquestioned unity of command which gives a classic type of central bank decisive power in a crisis is lacking in the Federal Reserve system, whose policies are compounded of divers purposes. Sometimes a regional bank asks for a change in the rediscount rate for one set of reasons, and the board at Washington, for entirely different reasons, approves the action. The result is that instead of being dangerously dictatorial, the system is likely to be tardy and hesitant. Back in the summer of 1927 the board compelled the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago to lower its rediscount rate against its own will, but that show of force was without precedent.

In its important open-market operations by which the system takes the initiative in increasing or decreasing the supply of credit, the system has, it is true, achieved unity of command since 1923 through an open-market committee consisting of the governors of five Eastern banks.

In passing, it should be pointed out that appointments to the Federal Reserve Board have not been in keeping with the importance of the system, which should attract the nation's best financial minds. Men of the caliber of Dwight W. Morrow, who gave up a Morgan partnership to become Ambassador to Mexico, would respond to a call to public office. The late President Wilson set a valuable precedent in selecting Paul M. Warburg, who was really the intellectual father of the system. Mr. Warburg singularly combines the qualities of the authentic scholar with those of the enterprising banker. Albert Strauss, who succeeded him, was well qualified. But for the most part this super-board which is supposed to boss the big bankers of the country has not been of as high a caliber as the position warrants.

Through sheer force of personality and capacity, the late Benjamin Strong, who was until his recent death governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and the outstanding personality in the system, was able to exert real leadership, especially in foreign contacts. The passing of Mr. Strong leaves the system without an unquestioned leader. Whether the mantle will fall upon Mr. Young or on the attractive George L. Harrison, who succeeded Mr. Strong, remains to be seen.

The record of 1928 in which the system made futile gestures to check the excessive flow of credit into speculative channels emphasizes the weakness rather than the dictatorial power of the system. Some high officials in the system, like Secretary Mellon, are inclined to regard the Federal Reserve machinery as little more than a shock-absorber. The rapid decline in the ratio of paper eligible for rediscount in the Federal Reserve Banks to the total assets of member banks potentially threatens to lower further the influence of the system. In recent years, the banks of the country, increasing their investments and their loans against securities at a disproportionately rapid pace, have become virtually investment trusts. Less than half of the assets of ordinary banks are tied up in commercial loans, and perhaps only 15 per cent in eligible paper plus about 7 per cent in government securities, which may be used as collateral against advances from the Federal Reserve Banks. The changes are generated by the tendency of prosperous corporations to free themselves from dependence on bank credit through raising permanent capital in the securities market, on the one hand, and by the tendency of ordinary business to get on a cash basis as a result of the willingness of finance companies to advance funds to consumers under the partial payment plan, on the other.

In order to keep the system in step with banking realities, some advocate making ordinary collateral loans and finance paper eligible for rediscount at the Federal Reserve system. These and other proposals will ultimately be aired in Congress. Dissatisfaction with the system will encourage patent-medicine legislative formulae, which will be designed to substitute mandatory rules for banking discretion, on which sound finance must inevitably rest. Already Senator William H. King of Utah, who has proposed a bill to check marginal speculation, has announced plans for another measure which will seek to prevent banks connected with the Federal Reserve system from extending credit or making loans for marginal transactions.

Even within the Federal Reserve system there is a desire for some change in the law. The board itself has favored a revision of the rules in respect to reserves. The rule which permits banks to carry only 3 per cent in reserves against time deposits has been abused, and has apparently stimulated the expansion of bank credit in directions not entirely sound. One or two influential members of the board believe that if the law made the announced rediscount rates minimum rates, instead of inflexible rates as at present, the system

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could proceed more effectively against recalcitrant member banks by fixing high penalty rates for such institutions.

Some of the administrative officers of the system deny that its failure to check speculation in the last year demonstrates structural weakness, asserting that the system never threw into the struggle the full force of its power. They contend that, if the system had been willing to pay the piper, it could have broken the backbone of the speculative movement. They think a procedure like the following would have been effective: Start the disciplinary campaign earlier, and instead of raising rediscount rates one-half of 1 per cent at a time as was done twice in the first half of 1928, get the dramatic effect of boosts in the rate of a full per cent at a time. Walter Bagehot revealed this trick in stopping inflationary markets decades ago. If this medicine had not been effective, the Federal Reserve Bank could have ordered member banks to have stopped increasing rediscounts, or could have gone further and ordered some reduction of outstanding rediscounts. Such a policy would not only have given a shock to the stock market, but would have temporarily checked prosperity in business and in agriculture. It would have been directly traceable to the system, and would have brought a storm of criticism from those adversely affected. On the other hand, the system has elected the alternative of a prolonged period of gradually advancing interest rates, which might conceivably be more costly in the long run. Dr. H. Schacht, head of the Reichsbank, stopped excessive speculation in Germany, and the Bank of Belgium and the Bank of France have held their nationals in check.

Among the current popular indictments of the system is the charge that, in an attempt to discipline speculation, industry and agriculture have been subjected to rising costs of credit. There is truth in this, for, even though the system provided additional credit for the seasonal expansion last autumn, it will hestitate to take more than transitory easing steps as long as it fears that to do so would tend to blow the lid off the speculative kettle.

Another charge, frequently heard west of the Hudson River, is that the system has been paying too much attention to the foreign financial situation. The reply to criticism of the international viewpoint is that domestic economic stability depends on normal finances abroad. Foreign prosperity affects not only our export trade, our foreign loans, but also the very stability of our own credit system.

An earlier indictment, which was never entirely quashed, was that the Federal Reserve system ruthlessly deflated the farmers in 1920 and 1921. The spokesmen for the system reply that the deflation was an inevitable sequel to the earlier inflation of farm products and farm lands. The collapse of rural real estate was looked upon as a parallel to the smash in the Florida urban boom. The troubles of the farmers are traced by some economists to their unfamiliarity with the technique for placing surplus funds into securities. As a result farmers during the prosperous war years used their gains to bid up the price of farm land, and increased their own mortgage indebtedness.

In summary, the Federal Reserve system is not a menace, but an instrument of service which frequently fails to achieve all of its high potentialities. However, it has been technically useful in making the currency and credit system more scientific, and has freed the business community of the fears of pre-war panics.

# In the Driftway

THE following letter has come to the Drifter from Paris to prove that his is not the only strange profession in the world, nor even the only one in which a living may be earned less by hard work than by mellifluous use of the wits.

At a little cafe in Paris I met a man who has the most unique profession in the world: ghost-laying. A ghost-layer is one who puts troublesome spooks and uneasy spirits to rest—by thoroughly practical or scientific methods. Indeed, my friend, Mr. M——, has made a fortune at the business, and has also added a side-line, equally lucrative—that of ghost-raising. He told me of the big job of ghost-laying that was the beginning of his fortune and fame. He was visiting one of those old French chateaus in the region of the Loire, which his friend the Count had purchased and refurnished. But M—— noticed that a wing of the beautiful old castle was entirely unoccupied, and inquired the reason.

"No one will sleep there," replied the Count, "because a ghost, a knight in armor, walks on moonlit nights. The story has spread, and many of my friends refuse to visit me at the chateau, much to my sorrow."

"I will lay your ghost for you," said M——.

"You are in earnest? If you can do that, I shall very gladly make it worth your while."

M—— replied that he would need a little time and permission to sleep in the haunted chamber. He did so. Sure enough, on a moonlit night a misty figure in armor slowly, very slowly, approached the bed, and finally disappeared. The next day M—— moved a suit of armor which stood at the end of a hall leading to the room. He had discovered the spook; the moonlight had somehow projected the reflection of the figure from a mirror in the room.

The ghost was laid; and M—— departed from the grateful Count with 250,000 francs in his pocket.

* * * * *

A YEAR or two later he met a wealthy American who was building a palatial imitation chateau somewhere in New Jersey. It had huge oaken beams, a circular staircase, a dungeon—everything, in fact, that money could buy, except a history. Then M—— had a bright idea.

"Why don't you have a ghost?" he suggested. The American was delighted. No other chateau in New Jersey could boast of being haunted.

"Fine—but how?"

"I am a professional ghost-raiser," answered M—— in his most businesslike manner. "Now, a good ghost will cost you $10,000."

The bargain was struck. And M——, who had learned something in his experience of ghost-laying, reconstructed the armored knight of the Count's chateau, and reinstated him, with all his original glory, in a moonlit room of the millionaire's house.

* * * * *

THE Drifter has never seen a ghost, and does not believe that he ever wants to. But if there should come a time in his life when he feels a good haunt to be an absolute necessity, he will call at once upon M——, professional ghost-layer and ghost-raiser.

THE DRIFTER

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# Correspondence

## The Central Issue

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: I have read with interest and approval your article in *The Nation* on the "Unthinkable Thing." However, England is mistress of the seas and wishes to remain so. The United States stands for the freedom of the seas. Although England and the United States may not go to war in the near future it is not entirely improbable that England may go to war with some other nation. England would then attempt to control neutral traffic as she did during the last war. If the United States wishes to protect her commerce under the conditions I have mentioned she must have a navy powerful enough approximately to equal that of England. It would appear that we must increase our navy or come to an agreement with England as to the freedom of the seas. England is not likely to come to such an agreement until the navy of the United States is large enough to compel this. This is a bare outline of the question as I see it and as many others see it. Your article does not touch on this aspect of the subject.

*Washington, January 2* A. S. Hitchcock

## Britain and Neutral Rights

To the Editor of The Nation:

Sir: I must confess to a certain disappointment over the fashion in which *The Nation* has chosen to dispose of the present Anglo-American tension growing out of naval questions. With the assertion that danger of conflict is real I heartily agree. But the very reality of the danger ought to lead to careful examination of the causes on the part of all who would seek to avert the catastrophe. And, after all, assuming, as *The Nation* does, that Cleveland was wrong in the Venezuelan episode and Coolidge provocative in his Armistice Day speech, granting also that some admirals are jingoes and that there is an unmistakable note of chauvinism running through all our present-day life, none of these circumstances explains the real danger of an Anglo-American collision.

Actually the danger of an Anglo-American war, the only real danger, results from the fact that Great Britain professes a policy which amounts to claiming the right to regulate the sea in her interests in time of war. This policy led to our War of 1812 with Great Britain and it just as certainly involved us in the World War in 1917. It would involve us either in war with Britain or Britain's foe in any later conflict, providing the British still followed it.

At the outset of the World War we had no considerable navy and Wilson promptly denounced as unrighteous the proposal that we should seek to construct ships or create an army at that time. He was relying upon the moral influence of the United States and he did not want it to be weakened by any apparent inconsistency. And this is the idea of those who protest against the conjunction of the Kellogg Pact and the Fifteen Cruiser Bill today. But while Mr. Wilson rejected all idea of armament, he undertook to "wage neutrality" by words alone. And, of course, he failed completely. The British proceeded to invade our neutral rights on the sea and thus made of us no more than an ally. Thanks to their sea-power we were forbidden all trade with Germany, while our exports to Britain and France enabled them to hold out.

The Germans, on their side driven by British illegalities, resorted to submarine warfare, both illegal and inhumane, and in the end we chose to go to war against the nation which committed murder rather than that which employed illegal but not physical violence. We were finally plunged into the war as a direct consequence of the British invasion of our unquestioned rights, which we were unable to maintain because our sea-power was negligible. Mr. Wilson, toward the end of our neutrality, at last changed his opinion and realized that neutrality had to be defended by force if it were to be maintained; thus he embarked us upon the great naval-expansion program. But as a consequence of the Washington Conference, while limitation was placed upon battleships, none was placed upon cruisers and there remained in British hands the power to carry out the policy Britain has always adopted in war.

For myself I share all *The Nation's* distrust of any vast naval expansion program, alike because of its domestic and foreign implications. But, on the other hand, I see no possible way to establish a situation making impossible a repetition of the events of 1812 and 1914 as long as Britain clings to her policy and retains her naval superiority. The day when our fleet is strong enough to make interference with our neutral rights a supreme hazard for Britain, engaged in war elsewhere, on that day such interference must become impossible.

Having undertaken equality by virtue of the Washington Conference ratios, if we had gone along, as the British did, building a reasonable number of new ships each year and maintaining at least approximately a cruiser as well as a battleship ratio of 5-5-3 with Britain and Japan, all the present fuss would have been avoided. Two new cruisers a year would have sufficed. But Coolidge was seized with the preposterous idea of not building ships and persuading or bullying the other nations not to build or to scrap. That is why we are now in the present situation and it is our fault, not that of the British. But a good many of my British friends, who believe that the time has come when Britain must discard the old policy of running the seas to suit her interests in time of war, are equally convinced that the Admiralty and "Diehards" will never abandon this policy until they are confronted by the physical proof that it has become obsolete. Once that fact sinks home, then we can have limitation, but if we don't have some degree of equality we shall go on with this wretched controversy.

If the British would renounce their doctrine of sea domination and agree to adequate insurance of neutral rights, I would join *The Nation* gladly in opposing the Fifteen Cruiser Bill. But because I don't want to go to war with Britain or Britain's enemy in the next European struggle, I want to have our navy strong enough to defend neutrality against invasion, as long as the invasion is indicated. The idea that we need a fleet equal to the British seems to me in the abstract to be absurd. But we do need a fleet equal to the British precisely as long as the British undertake with their supreme fleet to set aside all neutral rights.

*Washington, December 28* Frank H. Simonds

[We deny positively that we could not have made our influence felt against Great Britain in 1915-1916 without our fleet of that day. Mr. Simonds's logic and facts are extremely faulty. Our fleet thrown against England's, plus the menace of the German navy, would have brought England to terms if force had been needed. As a matter of fact Wilson made no genuine effort to assert our rights and bring England to book. Unanswerable proof of this is his holding Lansing's stiff note to England of May, 1915, for six months and then sending it along in an entirely emasculated form. More important by far is the simple fact that Wilson had in an embargo on all shipments of food and munitions to England a weapon to bring England to her knees without a single cruiser.—Editor The Nation.]

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# Books and Plays

## The Street

By HAL SAUNDERS WHITE

Now in this gilded street
Morning is a thinness
Between people—
Knife-edged transparency.
I cannot touch this stranger at the curb —
Not with bent body pressure
Break a wall
So frail as light.

## Portrait of a Sea Captain

By THOMAS CALDECOT CHUBB

Up the high hill above the square, white spire
That lifts above a hard, austere God's home,
Where daisies flourish thickly from the loam
And yellow buttercups run like wildfire,
Stands a plain clapboard house as sturdily
As any ship that I have ever known,
Though shaken by March gales, and there, alone,
Lives dark-browed Captain Salter, retired from sea.
Only upon the Sabbath, he descends
To listen through the sermon's long two hours,
And as he hears the preacher's scathing twang
He does not think of sin's inglorious ends,
But how the native girls, festooned with flowers,
Made tempting the soft night at Samarang.

# This Week

## Sacred Lunatics

A CHIEF disability of living in America is that one cannot easily hear Bernard Shaw lecture. That is one of the joys life offers to the favored ones of this generation and it is a pity that it is beyond the reach of most of us. I have before me, however, an unsatisfactory substitute in the form of a small book* containing the report of a recent public debate between Shaw and Chesterton. What a spectacle that tourney must have been! Mr. Shaw in his whiskers, Mr. Chesterton in his vast bulk, with Hilaire Belloc in the chair; the two speakers hurling shining shafts of nonsense at each other's heads with an air of sweetness and urbanity, while the chairman, according to his own statement, sat and sneered.

This fabulous scene should be preserved for future ages, for I doubt if its like will occur after these two men are dead. The art they display is a dying one; already it seems archaic and unreal. Mr. Belloc said in his concluding remarks that in five or ten or twenty years, "this debate will be as antiquated as crinolines are." It already is.

Mr. Shaw and Mr. Chesterton discussed the question "Do We Agree?" Unfortunately they limited their argument to the best way of attacking the evils of capitalism, omitting more interesting subjects such as love and strong drink and meat-eating and prize-fighting. Mr. Shaw put forward his familiar thesis of equal distribution of income—which incidentally implies the nationalization of all the means of production; while Mr. Chesterton argued the platform of his own personal society, the "Distributist League," which stands eternally opposed to the entire tendency of modern industrial life. Mr. Shaw would make it a capital offense to possess or desire sixpence more than any other man possesses. He would "convince the people that inequality of income is a greater social danger than murder" and he would bring about this absolute economic uniformity by means he did not here bother to describe to his audience. Mr. Shaw rests his case for justice and equality on the thin reeds of logic and his own unassailable benevolence. He ignores the discomforting complications of modern industrial life and proposes a solution of the economic problem that in its implications goes leagues beyond the most impossibilist dreams of the adolescent days of the Russian Revolution.

But if Mr. Shaw is Utopian, Mr. Chesterton is Arcadian. Since his remarks are discursive it may do as well, by way of presenting his position, to quote from the statement of principles of the Distributist League printed at the end of the book. The League "stands for the Liberty of the Individual and the Family Against interference by busybodies, monopolies, or the State." Thus while Bernard Shaw indulges his dangerous craving for extreme logical simplification, G. K. Chesterton lays his sturdy form across the right of way and dares the wheels of progress to roll over him. He declares that he will fight "for Small Shops and Shopkeepers against multiple shops and trusts," for "Individual Craftsmanship and Cooperation in Industrial enterprises," for "the Small Holder and the Yeoman Farmer against monopolists of large inadequately farmed estates." Mr. Chesterton believes in liberty and private ownership and unregenerate human nature; and he says that Mr. Shaw believes that "men and women should be slaves."

Whereas neither of them believes anything which has the slightest actual bearing on the course of economic events. They are unrealists, illusionists, players with ideas. Incapable of seeing the world of men and machines as it is, they build their hearts' desires of words and then toss them into the air. But Shaw at least is realist enough to know and to say flatly that he and his kind are madmen—and he wonders why madmen have always been admired and listened to by normal, respectable citizens. I think I can tell him: he and Mr. Chesterton are the spiritual bread and the intellectual circuses which the rest of us eagerly consume. They are our sacred lunatics; the minor deities of a dying faith to which we continue to cling because it simplifies life and points to easy and comforting conclusions about complicated problems.

FREDA KIRCHWEY

* "Do We Agree?" A debate between G. K. Chesterton and Bernard Shaw. Edwin Valentine Mitchell. $2.

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# More Personalities

*Masks in a Pageant.* By William Allen White. The Macmillan Company. $5.
*Big Frogs.* By Henry F. Pringle. Macy-Masius: The Vanguard Press. $3.
*The "Also Rans." Men Who Missed the Presidency.* By Don C. Seitz. Thomas Y. Crowell. $3.50.
*Strange Bedfellows.* By Silas Bent. Horace Liveright. $3.

RUMOR has it that William Allen White thinks more of this book than any that has yet come from his pen. He has avowedly essayed something far more important than the mere portrayal of Richard Croker, Thomas Platt, Grover Cleveland, Benjamin Harrison, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Harding and Coolidge, Hanna and Bryan, Al Smith and William Hale Thompson. He sets forth as he sees it the rise of the liberal movement here and abroad, "its day of power, its tragedy, and its passing." His masks in the American political pageant are, therefore, cited to illustrate the thesis that they were part of a movement. Thus he discusses first "The Old Kings"—Croker and Platt; characterizes Harrison, Cleveland, and McKinley as "The Early Stuarts"; Hanna and Bryan as "The Two Warwicks"; Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson as "The Great Rebellion"; Harding and Coolidge as "The Restoration"; with Al Smith and Thompson—yes, actually Mayor Thompson of Chicago!—as "The Young Princes of Democracy." To us the analogy seems far fetched, indeed. But here it is, with both "young princes" already interred politically, suffocated in the political Tower. Here, too, we have once more in detail the strangely baffling political philosophy of William Allen White.

That the portraits of the men he discusses are strikingly drawn goes without saying. He has lost none of his power to delineate and the picturesque phrase continues to come at his call. An eye-witness to much of what he records, the note of authenticity is often there. But not always can one be sure that he has all the facts in hand. Thus, to cite one instance, we have the hoary assertion that McKinley strove "earnestly to prevent war" with Spain. Mr. White is apparently not yet aware of the gross deceit practiced by McKinley in his suppression of General Woodford's dispatch from Madrid announcing the complete surrender of the Spanish a couple of days *before* McKinley asked Congress to declare war. So Mr. White can actually write that "the period of his [McKinley's] highest responsibility and greatest strength came just before the war with Spain." Let him read in James Ford Rhodes's history how that "strength" yielded to a pure desire to advance his party by what was surely the least excusable war in history. Who else ever declared war after the enemy had yielded everything demanded? The writer of these lines was also a daily journalist in 1898 and nearer the center of things than Kansas. He cannot recall that, as Mr. White says, "the waves of public wrath at the delay of the war with Spain beat in breakers about the White House." The war was Hearst-made; but the public inflammation was confined only to the dupes of the yellow press of the day. McKinley could have stopped it in an hour.

Far more grateful is Mr. White's truth-telling about Harding and the silence of Hoover and Hughes while in his rotten, crooked Cabinet. He is at his best in his frank sketch of Coolidge as a man "of anemic emotions," of "craft and lack of candor," of "self-sufficiency and a certain ruthlessness to make his will prevail"; as the prophet who said "the business of America is business"—and charted his every move by that belief. But even here one finds curiously slight understanding of the economic forces which have controlled America, which have throttled liberalism, and put us into the "Restoration" under Coolidge and Harding.

It is difficult for a radical reformer to follow Mr. White at many points—he who was so ardent for Roosevelt as the great Progressive, then refused to support La Follette, and finally wound up at Kansas City in 1928 as an ardent supporter of Senator Curtis, whom he had so often criticized and denounced, as the best man for the Presidency! If he records a boxing of the circle by the liberal movement, he has himself run the gamut. But if one lays down the book with impatience that there is so much compromise in it, so obvious an effort to bend these characters into the preconceived plan of the philosophy of the writer, one recognizes also the kindly traits which have made William Allen White what he is.

In "Big Frogs" Henry F. Pringle binds together fourteen sketches of such diverse personalities as Herbert Hoover, Bernarr Macfadden, Kenesaw Landis, Will Hays, John S. Sumner, William H. Anderson, and Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. Coming from the pen that wrote such an admirable biography of Al Smith last year these sketches seem thin, journalese, and disappointing, though entertaining and easily read. The best of them is that on the President-elect. As to Mr. Hoover's remaining in the Harding Cabinet Mr. Pringle has this to say: "He knew that all was not well. He was depressed and morose and daily on the point of resigning. Here, I think, the philosophy of an engineer halted him. Because conditions are dirty is no reason to quit a job." The change in the Hoover of 1928 from the Hoover of 1918 he sums up in these words: "He is particularly talented in those engineering problems, such as water-power and transportation, that must be solved on a national scale within the next few years. His gifts can never be applied to them unless, for the moment, he bows to expediency." Thus fall not only angels but all our candidates for office; in this excuse for self-violence lies the chief reason why our political standards are so low and our public men such trimmers and hypocrites.

Don Seitz's nimble pen has produced still another book, "The 'Also Rans' "—the unsuccessful candidates for the Presidency from Aaron Burr to William J. Bryan. The others, with the exception of Alton B. Parker, being still living, he has not deemed it "seemly to reexhibit them in their retirement from party leadership." Written for the campaign just ended, the several sketches are concise, almost staccato in form. If they give no fresh viewpoints of some of the most interesting men in our history, such as Burr and Henry Clay, they form a handy volume of reference for those who do not wish to dig deeply.

Silas Bent's volume includes not only sketches of Hoover and Smith and Mellon and Dawes, but also a number of valuable essays upon phases of our political life such as the Taming of the Tariff Commission by the protected interests it was supposed to control and to regulate, and a brief tribute to the value of investigations carried on by the Senate. It is for his writings on the newspapers that Mr. Bent is best known and this volume contains six chapters on the press, including studies of Mr. Ochs and the New York *Times,* of Hearst and his Mexican forgeries, and, most useful of all, a deserved castigation of the press for its role of international window-smashing. He has been charged by those he has attacked with occasional recklessness of statement. I do not believe the charge will lie against this volume; nor do I believe that the great value of his "Ballyhoo" published a year ago by Boni and Liveright can be demolished by picking minor flaws in it. Both books have genuine value as critiques; that they have stung some of our modern journalists is proof of that. In this one his study of the decadence in the character of the matter carried by the Associated Press is especially worth while. To this its managers make answer that in "jazzing up" the service they are

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merely responding to the demands of the constituent members—which only confirms the critics in their insistence that the quality and tone of the dailies are not what they used to be.

OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

# Democracy and Emotion

*Emotion as the Basis of Civilization.* By J. H. Denison. Charles Scribner's Sons. $5.

THIS book does not deal, as its title might suggest, with the psychoanalytic treatment of political institutions; it is concerned with a different and less modern type of considerations, broadly speaking the same as those which inspired Bagehot's "English Constitution." The main topic with which it is concerned is social coherence, which it says can be achieved in two ways, one of which it calls patriarchal and the other fratriarchal. Roughly speaking, these amount to the same thing as monarchy and democracy. Social cohesion, as the author quite rightly points out, is dependent upon emotion and hardly possible except on some emotional basis; mere force, as exercised by conquerors, has never long succeeded in holding an empire together, unless it has come to be replaced by some sentiment of unity on the part of the populations concerned. There is nothing novel in this contention; indeed it was expressed in Napoleon's dictum that one can do anything with bayonets except sit upon them. The essential theses of the book are that democracy is better than monarchy; that it can only be practiced successfully by persons living north of latitude 50; that nevertheless the best example of it is the United States; that there is a still better possible system which he calls anepsiarchy, which means treating people as cousins rather than as brothers; and that this system would put the various groups in the United States in a hierarchy, placing the Nordics at the top and Negroes at the bottom, but with the possibility of rising to a higher group on proving the possession of those qualities of justice and fair play in which Massachusetts for example has shown itself so proficient. So much is made of the prominence of the British and Americans in these qualities of justice and fair play that one is led almost insensibly to regard it as an example of these qualities when men of alien groups are executed for crimes that they have not committed.

All the civilizations of the world are reviewed in succession by Mr. Denison; he admires particularly the contributions of Buddha and Zoroaster, concerning the latter of whom he knows much more than is known by modern specialists. He admires both, especially because they belong to the Indo-European race, whereas most religious leaders have, alas, been Semites.

When emotion is considered in relation to civilization, there are two separate problems which are often confounded; the one is that of generating the right kind of emotion, the other is that of giving an existing emotion the right kind of object. The former of these problems can be dealt with to a certain extent by psychoanalysis, but more radically biochemistry; it is a problem which can only be tackled by essentially modern scientific methods, and it does not come into Mr. Denison's purview. The problem which he tackles is the second, namely how to direct the emotions of reverence, affection, and dislike into those channels which will produce the most coherent community. This is a problem of what the behaviorists call conditioning, and it is one to which statesmen and religious teachers have been in the habit of addressing themselves. In spite of the width of Mr. Denison's purview I do not find that he has anything very new to say on this matter.

I have learned certain things from Mr. Denison's book, for example: that Francis Bacon had his head cut off; that the war succeeded in making the world safe for democracy; that it was not until recently that other sects than the National Church were tolerated in England, whereas other authorities say that this occurred in the reign of William III; that Nesta Webster, who attributes the French Revolution to demoniac possession in the literal sense, has advanced a valuable hypothesis in the suggestion that all radicalism in the modern world springs from a man called Weisshaupt who organized a group of illuminati in 1776; that the Ku Klux Klan is a useful organization, though we must hope "that it will not degenerate into an organization for political power and plunder"; that the Confucian odes date from the year 1719 B.C., although they contain allusions to events which occurred in 776 B.C.; that nothing was ever nobler than the character of the Samurai; that Buddhism came into Japan about 800 A.D., whereas the usually received date is 552; that the fact that foreigners in America are as law-abiding as they are is "due to the efforts that are being made to train them in American feelings," although there is no other civilized country where educated natives so habitually break the law; and that recently in America the Protestant sects have been in the forefront of the movement for social progress. Much else may be learned from Mr. Denison's pages, but space forbids me to lengthen the list.

BERTRAND RUSSELL

# Sport—Done to Death

*Sports.* By John R. Tunis. The John Day Company. $2.50.

THERE are two kinds of machines which have raised more hell than all others combined—cannons and printing presses. Mr. Tunis, a sometime ranking tennis player, presents us with an admirable picture of what the printing press has done to sportsmanship in America. It is almost as sad an exhibit as the ravages of advertising copy upon the sales resistance of the wayfaring man.

He invites us into the press box of the Yale-Princeton football game. From this shrine stories are going out which will fill two or three solid pages in practically every Sunday newspaper in the country. And who is sending these stories out?

> Probably fewer than 20 per cent went to college and of that number, perhaps half of one per cent played football. Fewer still attended either Yale or Princeton as an undergraduate. The great majority of the working press at the event has not the slightest personal interest in the occasion, or the contestants. To them, the afternoon's work is just another job to be done. Princeton? Yale? Rats! They would rather be sitting with the boys in the office in the Saturday afternoon poker game.

They are there not for sport but to help newspaper proprietors make more money. And the laudable desire of newspaper proprietors to work more presses, and make more money, has just about ruined not only football as a genuine sport, but nearly every game of any consequence. We have become so used to this that Mr. Tunis's thesis has a quaint, old-fashioned air about it—like expecting an editor not to be afraid of his advertisers. It is a little hard for us to get the connection. Perhaps most of us are too far gone ever to get it.

Well, take a deep breath, think back two generations, and listen carefully while I repeat very slowly: The connection is that sport by definition is played for fun. A sportsman is one who plays for the fun of it, and who would rather never win at all than win unfairly. The instant other considerations appear, sport becomes work, and the sportsman a professional or a business man. Sport simply cannot live in an atmosphere of grasping fingers; of somebody trying to make something out of it. It may furnish an amusing pastime for those who par-

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ticipate at second hand—at two dollars a look—but it is not sport, it is business. From this point of view, there is hardly a vestige of first-class sport left in America.

The printing press has contributed to its demise in a variety of ways. It has engineered rivalries, compulsions to win at any cost, in order to keep its extras and sporting pages filled. It has raised performers to such pinnacles of publicity that they lose their heads, and before they know it are indorsing cigarettes, or going prima donna like Suzanne and Mr. Tilden. It keys other performers to the point of nervous breakdown; until many confess that they hate the game they play. It ruins the characters of executives of supposedly amateur associations by making them bid for personal publicity rather than for the good of the game they are sponsoring. It makes a mockery of sport by giving space to the antics of Channel swimmers, marathon dancers, and flag-pole sitters. In brief, from the point of view of a good game, a clean game, a chivalrous game, played for the fun of it—the whole thing is a stinking, rotten mess. Even polo, the noblest of them all, has fallen into the cesspool.

Or so Mr. Tunis would have us believe. I believe him.

STUART CHASE

# North of Eden

*West-Running Brook.* By Robert Frost. Henry Holt and Company. $2.50.

*Selected Poems.* By Robert Frost. Henry Holt and Company. $2.50.

THE best poems in Mr. Frost's new volume will repay a third or a fourth or a fifteenth reading. Certain pages of the book remain for me, after several attempts to find more in them than meets the eye, trivial; and certain others are merely good enough. But at least five poems here have all of their author's unique excellence, which is to say that they are not to be compared with the poems of any other living man, and to say that they give an absolute, almost undiscussable pleasure.

These few do not include, though they come near doing so, any of the several epigrams in which Mr. Frost may be seen taking a swing through universals. I suspect that he cannot afford extreme brevity, any more than he can afford great length; and universals (directly stated) are not for him. Neither do they include the one dialogue of the volume, which incidentally is the title-poem. And certainly they do not include any of the half-dozen pieces which are but conceits, even if these conceits have the pure mark of Mr. Frost's mind upon them. But they do include the poems which represent Mr. Frost in the act of standing and looking at some very definite thing—a pool in the spring woods, a chimney smoking under the new moon, the water coming in off the Pacific, a bird going to bed, or a "winter garden in an alder swamp"—standing and looking at it and talking about it in such a way that it suddenly and weirdly becomes a world.

The thing is done so quietly, and sometimes in lines of such bald, even awkward clarity, that one cannot say how it is done. But it *is* done—in Once by the Pacific, for instance, where the coming of the waves against the shore takes on the ominous importance of all force whatsoever; in the Cocoon, where a poor house smoking silently in the evening haze becomes a creature spinning its anchor to the earth and moon; and in Acceptance, where birds settling after sunset into their dark nests quite sufficiently express the comfort there is in all darkness, and in the need no longer to think.

It is done even better in two poems which, fitly enough, have winter or late spring for their time and the unpeopled woods for their scene. For Mr. Frost is a northerly poet, and his paradise—he is concerned almost wholly with paradise—is a wintry one. Spring Pools shows him by no means comfortable in the certainty that these bits of forest water which

> still reflect
> The total sky almost without defect

will soon be gone,

> And yet not out by any brook or river,
> But up by roots to bring dark foliage on.

That means shade, and therefore luxuriance, and therefore hiding and confusion; Mr. Frost so much prefers the total sky on an uncomplicated day. And thus in A Winter Eden, where a simple scene is so delicately stroked in that it lives even more truly than the birds and deer who move across it, he contemplates perfection:

> So near to paradise all pairing ends:
> Here loveless birds now flock as winter friends,
> Content with bud-inspecting. They presume
> To say which buds are leaf and which are bloom.

In a new edition of "Selected Poems," which first appeared five years ago, Mr. Frost has wisely added fourteen pieces to the original list; and the selection could be even larger than he now modestly makes it. I am particularly glad to see that he has put in To Earthward, Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, Two Look at Two, Goodby and Keep Cold, The Ax-Helve, and The Need of Being Versed in Country Things.

MARK VAN DOREN

# Red Rubbish

*Red Mexico.* By Captain Francis McCullagh. Louis Carrier and Company. $3.50.

THIS is sizzling interventionist propaganda, vintage of over a decade ago, acidified in the interval. With a vulture, supposedly the Mexican *zopilote,* whose claws drip blood, on the jacket, the words "Red Mexico" on the cover likewise oozing gore, the end-papers crimson, and the subtitle "A Reign of Terror in Mexico," the volume achieves a new level of hysteria, fanaticism, and fantasy. The preface's opening paragraph sounds the keynote:

> The political and economic position of Mexico at the present moment is very critical; and, despite a vast amount of bluster on the part of President Calles, that truculent gentleman has sunk into what is practically a condition of dependence on the United States which, without having recourse to military measures, can bring him to heel any time it likes by financial pressure or by the manipulation of the arms embargo.

The book then proceeds to rewrite Mexican history. All its failures are ascribed to the fact that "for the last seventy years America has backed up every anti-clerical movement in Mexico," and "there was continuity in that policy owing to the fact that all the Presidents have been Protestants . . ." President Wilson was influenced in his opposition to General Victoriano Huerta under whose "strong Conservative administration" Mexico was "perfectly safe" (no mention of Huerta's wholesale butcheries following his assassination of Madero) "by the traditions of his [Woodrow Wilson's] Orange ancestors in Ulster." And when there seemed to be a prospect—evidently a highly desirable one from the author's standpoint—of landing U. S. marines at Tampico, "Uncle Sam was suddenly hit from behind" by a "combination of Protestant, Pacifist, Prohibitionist, Humanitarian, and Bolshevist associations."

In short it is the Protestanism of the United States that, according to the writer, has bedeviled Mexico, and is re-

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sponsible for the ascendancy of "Plutarco Elías Calles . . . this half-savage dictator who hates the United States and detests the English language . . . actuated by greed and fanaticism . . . and gathered round him at Chapultepec as choice a collection of Communists, thugs, and army deserters as had ever met on the soil of Mexico." Ever and anon Captain McCullagh returns to lash as one the "Communist, Pacifist, Methodist, and Humanitarian" influences in the United States.

The character of Captain McCullagh's "facts" and "revelations" may be gauged from the photograph (the jacket asserts that the book is illustrated with many extraordinary photographs—and indeed it is!) which shows a corpse propped up against a tree. The caption beneath is: "Though a former provisional President of Mexico, General Adolfo de la Huerta was partially wrapped in sacking and exposed in the Plaza at Nogales in Sonora after his killing by Federal troops." At this writing former provisional President Adolfo de la Huerta is very much alive.

The other "facts" in the book, notably those relating to the executions of the brothers Pro Juarez, one of them a priest, for their implication in an earlier—and unsuccessful—attempt to assassinate Obregon, are as trustworthy. Of the publicly admitted motive of the later and successful assassin, Jose Toral, Captain McCullagh discreetly says nothing. Although he alludes to "50,000 rebels in the field against Calles," to "gun-running carried on by the friends of the Catholics" from the United States to "Catholic guerrillas," and declares with apparent relish "all over the Republic there is guerrilla fighting, blowing up of railway bridges, burning of houses, killing of men, women, and children," he apparently considers it criminal for the government to defend and maintain itself, to put down insurrection, and to deal summarily with its leaders. No government on earth would do otherwise under the circumstances, yet not only does he exhaust the language of vituperation in dealing with Calles, but Ambassador Morrow comes in for rebuke, as do all those who apparently go to Mexico with views less hostile and frenzied than the author's. Says he:

> The (Federal) District swarms with American trippers and with American contingents of various kinds come to see Mexico and do homage to its Dictator. There have been contingents from the American Federation of Labor (come to prostrate themselves before "the Labor President"), from various chambers of commerce, from Protestant churches, from the Elks, Kiwanis, Mystic Shriners, and other strange bodies. . . .

The fourth and last part of this unique volume—American-Mexican Relations—devotes a chapter to "the three levers" by which the United States can bring pressure to bear on Mexico, in which the safeguarding of clericalism, oil, and foreign rights is again held aloft as the desired goal.

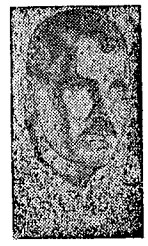
ERNEST GRUENING

# Novels in Brief

*Ida Brandt.* By Hermann Bang. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

Hermann Bang was born in 1857 on the Island of Als and died a few years ago after a long, successful career as journalist and novelist. The scenes of this novel shift from a large estate on an island off the Danish coast to Copenhagen. The pictures of life on the country estate and of Copenhagen society impress the reader with their authenticity, and are to that extent interesting. As a novel the book is competent and reasonably vivacious, about as good as Winston Churchill or Owen Wister. There is every reason why a publisher should publish such a book when it is first presented to him. It takes no little talent to hold up a mirror to the jumbled contempo-


## *THE MAGIC ISLAND*
## by William B. Seabrook



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raneous life of any place or period; and many different talents must be given their chance if a literature is to be built up. One questions, however, why so many fairly undistinguished records of this sort should be painstakingly translated into English and presented to an American public.

*We Forget Because We Must.* By W. B. Maxwell. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

Anyone who has a great deal of time on his hands may find certain pleasant rewards in reading this latest novel by Mr. Maxwell, who belongs to the school of writers who believe that the end justifies the means. If one is ready to read many pages about people who do not at first offer any facets to one's interest, to give eyesight and attention to a great many incidents that are not intrinsically interesting, one will be surprised eventually by discovering that Mr. Maxwell knows a thing or two about human nature and life in general, and can add a touch here and a touch there to his man of straw, until, to our surprise, Charles Derwent emerges as a very real person. But life is short.

*Black Sadie.* By T. Bowyer Campbell. Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.50.

This is a clever, breezy, rapid story of a completely heartless and amoral little pickaninny who managed to ride on the crest of every wave that came her way and was eventually swept into affluence and fame as a dancer in a New York night club. The author employs the traditionally accepted Negro vernacular effectively, without discovering any new melodies or poignancies. His conclusion, skilfully thrust forward throughout the book and definitely stated at its close, that the selfishness, unmorality, and general no-count qualities of his heroine are due to her race, is too ridiculous for discussion, and, like most fatal stupidities, leaves an unpleasant taste in the mouth.

*Money of Her Own.* By Margaret Culkin Banning. Harper and Brothers. $2.

Mrs. Banning is as clever in her surface characterization and in the management of her narrative as she is illogical and confused in her fundamental ideas. The hero is one of those sturdy and handome young men who stands squarely on his own feet and makes a rich, indifferent world like him for what he is, in spite of his poverty. Yet all the reader's interest in him is subtly commandeered by references, dropped by the author, of course, and not by the independent young man, to the splendor he once knew, to the Long Island estate of his dead father, to the Rolls he once drove, to the polo he used to play, to the plane he used to fly, and to the excellent cut of his slightly worn clothes. The prince in disguise is still a prince, and we love him because he is a prince and because obviously he will hack out a new kingdom for himself. So we do homage to our inherited respect for honest poverty, at the same time that we gratify our desires to be fabulously rich.

*Black Country.* By Bruce Beddow. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

Hugh Walpole writes of this English book: "I regard this . . . as very remarkable indeed. It is the best novel about the English miner I have read after Lawrence . . . it is, however, in its character drawing that it is exceptional. . . . The central figure I shall never forget." The central figure betrays the cause which his mother, perhaps the best of the many admirably drawn portraits, has trained him throughout boyhood and youth to serve. Risen at last to a position of trust in the struggling miners' union, he appropriates their funds to his private ambition to become rich. But Mr. Beddow does not dismiss this hero merely as a villain. The events and scenes of the book are projected through his consciousness. One has a lively interest in him, and this interest does not cease even after his treachery, which is in a sense symbolical and typical, and is, of course, the crux of the weakness of the labor movement. Mr. Beddow's book is saved from being a sociological polemic by the fact that the drama takes place through intensely individualized persons. His talent is unusual and exceptionally promising, his sympathetic perceptions poignant. But he strikes me as a talent still struggling with itself. The book is too long, and possibly too darkly projected. It seems like a chunk of coal, not yet kindled to fire, but solidly packed with significance.

*With Malice Toward None.* By Honoré Willsie Morrow. William Morrow and Company. $2.50.

Mrs. Morrow's novel of Lincoln during the last two years of the Civil War revolves around the conflict between Lincoln and his friend Sumner over reconstruction plans. It moves rapidly and easily and presents a lively gallery of Civil War celebrities. Like most historical novels, it is neither very good nor very bad. It is lazy reading for an adult, and often fascinating reading for a child, who comes thus, perhaps, to a conception of history as alive and real, rather than an abstract "subject" on which one takes examinations. Novels of this sort find their territory invaded today by the fictionized biography, but they stand, I think, on rather firmer ground.

A. B. P.

# Other Briefs

*The March of Commerce.* By Malcolm Keir. *The Winning of Freedom.* By William Wood and Ralph Henry Gabriel. *Makers of a New Nation.* By John Spencer Bassett. *American Idealism.* By Luther A. Weigle. *In Defense of Liberty.* By William Wood and Ralph Henry Gabriel. *The Pageant of America,* volumes 4, 6, 9, 10, and 7. Yale University Press.

These five new volumes in the series called The Pageant of America deal respectively with American communication by water, land, and air; with the Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican War; with politics since 1865; with the development of American religion in most of its phases; and with the wars since 1860, including the World War. The historical method is almost entirely pictorial, the text serving merely as commentary on the illustrations, which come from thousands of sources and are of great value thus collected. But it is increasingly clear that the plan, allowing as it does for the meagerest of texts, allows for no subtlety or criticism on the part of the authors, who therefore, particularly in the portions devoted to recent events, become almost childishly simple.

*Armenia and the Near East.* By Fridtjof Nansen. Duffield and Company. $3.

It is difficult to tell why this book was written and published. It is not an account of Dr. Nansen's distinguished services for the relief of the stricken Armenian people; it is not a book of travel; it is not an historical account of the trek of Near Eastern minorities; it is not a discussion of the political and economic status of the Soviet Republic of Armenia. It is a curious hodge-podge of travelog, personal reminiscence, historical allusion, geographical observations, and other odds and ends apparently gathered by Dr. Nansen from his letters, notebooks, and diaries. The only chapters which possess unity are one on the history of Georgia and two on the history of Armenia; these contribute nothing to our store of knowledge and are marked by serious omissions and by the repetition of moth-eaten generalities. No student of the Near East will give this book serious consideration, and the general reader will find in it little

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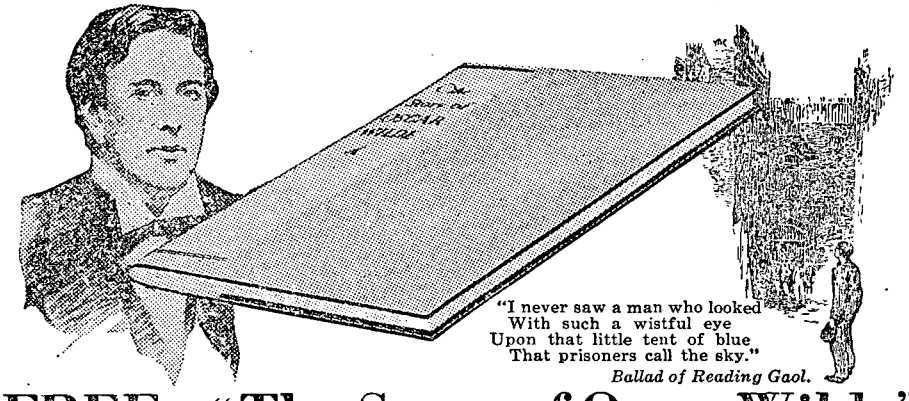

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With such a wistful eye
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That prisoners call the sky."

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which is either interesting or informing. One curious omission is the fact that nowhere does Dr. Nansen mention the year in which his journey to Russian Armenia was made, although he gives days and months with meticulous care; hence those who refer to this book in the future—if there be any such—will find themselves somewhat puzzled. It is to be hoped that Dr. Nansen will yet publish something of real merit dealing with his heroic services to the Near Eastern peoples; the present volume does not do justice either to him or to his former proteges.

*Collected Poems.* By Richard Aldington. Covici, Friede. $3.

If intelligence and honesty and general intellectual attractiveness could make a poet Mr. Aldington would be one. The author of "Images," "Images of War," "Images of Desire," "Exile," and "A Fool i' the Forest" neither gains nor loses by the collection of his poems into the present very handsome volume, except that now we have full evidence that he never possessed the necessary spark of whatever it is that makes a poet. Perhaps it was unfortunate that he devoted so much of his career to imagism, which required a subtlety of rhythm that he was unable to furnish, so that he produced a series of volumes as remarkable for the flatness of their free verse as for the importance of their themes; and so that he never developed his gift, shown at its best in Songs for Puritans and Songs for Sensualists, as a manipulator of hard, brisk, regular measures.

*How the Old Woman Got Home.* By M. P. Shiel. Macy-Masius: The Vanguard Press. $2.50.

The old woman finally does get home through a welter of turgid rhetoric that even Carlyle might envy. From this tortuous phrasing and perverse punctuation emerges a surprisingly ingenious and absorbing mystery story. The characters are original and even exciting in their own right—an idealistic hero whose God is mathematical science, a crafty parson-villain who acts from a noble motive and agonizes over his own villainies, a shrewd and persistent woman of the slums who unravels the plot. These characters and the searching, if often incomprehensible, discourses on abstract philosophy, economy, and science lend a sort of unusual distinction to a "detective novel" without a crime and without a detective.

*The Saga of Cap'n John Smith.* By Christopher Ward. Harper and Brothers. $2.

In clever and skillful verse Mr. Ward parodies the heroic epic and offers his own amusing account of the life and exploits of Captain Smith. The free narrative permits him to intersperse mild but effective satirical comments on the absurdity of militarism, British imperialism and snobbishness, American intolerance and hypocrisy.

# Drama

## The Kiss to Common Sense

A SELF-INDULGENT lawyer of thirty-five is proceeding in leisurely and comfortable fashion toward marriage with a charming woman who has been his mistress for twelve years. Suddenly there appears upon the scene a high-minded but mouse-like creature who presents him to his sixteen-year-old son and suggests that the time has come for the father to assume the direction of his boy's education.

Now our lawyer is appalled but also intrigued. The son is no less high-minded than the mother, and the father is taken by an impulse to enjoy the novel pleasure attendant upon "doing the right thing." The boy is installed in the house, the mother is established (temporarily of course) along with him, and only the mistress can see just whither events are drifting. In a huff she departs for the Bavarian Alps, leaving her lover to decide by himself just how far in the right direction he really wants to go.

Such is the situation presented in "Caprice" (Guild Theater), and the real interest of the piece lies in the effort to guess just which of the two or three possible morals the author is going to choose. Sentiment proclaims, of course, that there is only one decent or satisfactory conclusion. What the phrenologists used to call philoprogenitiveness is a master passion in all normal men, and any father decent enough to pass the dramatic censor would inevitably feel himself closer to the mother of his child than to anyone else however charming or however much more like him in those trivial things called habits, traditions, and philosophies of life this someone else might be. To suggest otherwise would be, adds Sentiment, to indulge the most disgusting cynicism and to leave in the mouths of the audience a most unpleasant taste.

But comedy is just exactly the art of admitting with grace the things which Sentiment cannot contemplate without horror. It is, said someone or other, "the kiss given to common sense behind the back of respectability" and it leaves no sense of sin as an *arrière pensée*. It comes to the aid of those whom sentiment can no longer keep warm and it tells them that human weakness is acceptable enough if only one will begin by not expecting too much where very little is to be found. It bids them to be content with a sensible conclusion when a noble one cannot reasonably be expected, and specifically, in a case like the present, to remember that it is just as well for an intelligent man not to try to live beyond his sentimental income.

In a burst of enthusiasm our lawyer might have overestimated his capacity for virtue. He might have adopted the son and married the mother. Indeed nine out of ten American playwrights would have found it very hard to resist the temptation to make him do so. But while Sentiment would tell us that such a resolution proved him sound at heart, Comedy would remind us that it would, on the contrary, merely prove him a fool; for he, being what he is, could not possibly live very long on the new and exalted level of feeling. And this brings us, by the way, to the one and only requirement for the character of a comic hero. Any other kind, be he tragic or dramatic, must be good; a comic hero needs only to be intelligent enough to know how good it is worth his while to try to be. He can fail in many respects and still be a hero, but he must not fail in self-knowledge.

"Caprice" is only fairly well written. It is somewhat deficient in wit, and there are half a dozen American dramatists who could write lighter and brighter dialogue than that supplied by Mr. Sil-Vara, a Viennese whom it introduces to New York. But its author has what only very few American writers have yet been able to achieve. He is at home in the comic world; he thinks naturally in its terms; and he instinctively follows its logic without feeling any impulse to wander off into sentiment; and it is this which so few of our own writers can do. They know how to be funny—much funnier indeed than Sil-Vara—but they do not know how to be comically consistent because they have not yet learned how to kiss common sense without rushing off immediately afterward to ask pardon of respectability.

"Caprice" brings that delightful comic couple Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne together once more. Mr. Lunt is very nearly at his best; Miss Fontanne for some reason is not. She is generally one of the most delightful of our comediennes, but in the present piece she overplays the very thin part which is given her and seems noisy in her efforts to give the role more vitality than the author was able to write into it.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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# International Relations Section

## Justice to Filipinos

By VICENTE G. BUNUAN

THE greatest single problem that confronts the United States today with reference to the Philippine question is the conflict that has arisen in the economic interests of the Philippines and the United States. For America is beginning to realize that the Philippines constitute a source of danger to her own economic well-being. And this clash will assume increasing proportions if the present political relations between the two countries remain unchanged. Already steps have been taken by the particular concerns affected to protect themselves from Philippine incursions into American life and interests.

The free-trade relationship between the United States and the Philippines should first be considered. American beet sugar is menaced by Philippine sugar and so in behalf of that industry the Timberlake bill, which would limit the exportation of Philippine sugar to this country to 500,000 long tons, was introduced in the last session of Congress. Were this bill enacted into law it would place the Philippines at a further disadvantage in the free-trade relations between the two countries, because under the present free-trade arrangement Philippine products exported to the United States containing 20 per cent of foreign material cannot be admitted here free of duty, while all American products containing any amount of foreign material are admitted free of duty in the Philippines.

Philippine copra is proving itself a menace to the dairy industry of the United States and quite naturally efforts are being made to counteract the danger by the proposal to limit the importation of this product or by the imposition of duty upon it.

Competition with Philippine lumber has caused a great deal of worry to American concerns engaged in the lumber industry. They have succeeded in securing a prohibition of the use of the trade name "Philippine Mahogany" on certain species of Philippine lumber which has borne that name during the last two decades.

It will be noted that free trade between the Philippines and the United States has the effect of placing our goods in competition with American products. The Filipinos do not blame American concerns for seeking relief, but it does not seem quite just and fair that there should be a duty or limitation on our products and none on American goods. America, the sovereign power, on the one hand, cannot assume the unrestricted privileges of free trade and, on the other hand, impose on the Philippines, the subject colony, the disadvantage of limitation. Reciprocity to be real must be mutual. Aside from the effects of free trade there are other manifestations of the conflict of interests between the Philippines and the United States. The presence on the Pacific coast of a large number of Filipinos is proving itself a menace to American labor. With a view to protecting the interests of the latter in this connection, a bill was introduced by Representative Welch of California at the last session of Congress barring Filipinos from the United States.

Also out on the Pacific coast the right of a Filipino to own land has been questioned. It is a significant coincidence that this became the object of public discussion at the very time Governor-General Stimson was urging the Philippine Government to liberalize land laws for American capital. Again at the last session of Congress an amendment that had already been incorporated in the new merchant-marine bill and which had already passed the House, which would have permitted the Filipinos the same privileges of employment, as to number and rank, in American vessels that American citizens, including Hawaiians and Porto Ricans, possess, was stricken out at the last minute by the conference committee of both houses. Under the present arrangement Filipinos are treated in this connection just like foreigners. The unfairness of this situation becomes even more apparent when one considers the fact that Americans may be employed without restriction of any kind in vessels of Philippine registry.

Then, too, Filipino officers in the United States army can only be assigned to the Philippine Scouts. As the highest rank in that branch of the United States army is as yet only that of major, they cannot rise beyond that rank, at least for the present. Incidentally it may be stated that during the Spanish regime Filipinos could rise to the highest military rank, and command, as they did, Spanish troops. Filipinos have occupied the post of Prime Minister of Spain.

The question of the naturalization of a Filipino is another instance of conflict. Previous to 1925 Filipinos were held eligible to become citizens of the United States. Many Filipinos took advantage of this ruling in many States of the Union and are now American citizens. In 1925, however, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled, in a decision rendered in the case of Toyoto against the United States, 268 U. S. 402 (May 25, 1925) that Filipinos, except those who have served in the navy three years, are not qualified for American citizenship. Although Toyoto was a Japanese, the decision also ruled specifically on Filipino eligibility.

It will be seen from the foregoing that Filipino interests constitute a menace to this country and measures have been taken, with others sure to follow, to counteract this danger. In so far as the Filipinos are concerned, their contention is, and all fair-minded people will agree with them, that it is only just and fair that while we are under the American flag, and that against our will, we are entitled to all the rights and privileges which that flag affords to all that come under it. We are willing to have America impose duty and limitation upon our goods, in the self-same manner that it is imposed upon the goods of other foreign nations. But to do that she must first set us free. We are ready to have her apply to the Filipinos the restrictions of her immigration laws, as they are now applied to foreign peoples. But she must first give us our liberty.

She may continue treating us as foreigners with respect to limitation of employment in her merchant marine. But we should first be as free as the foreign peoples upon whom this limitation is now applied. She may impose any restriction, or forbid us altogether from owning land in the United States, but she must place us on a plane of political equality with her. She may continue to set a limit to the rank to which we may attain in her army and in her navy, or pre-

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ent us from joining them entirely, but first we should be nade free.

She may prevent us from becoming citizens of this great ountry, but first she must sever the political bonds that now ind the two peoples together.

The granting of independence to the Philippines as ledged not only in the Philippine Organic Act, but also by uthorized spokesmen of the American people, is the best vay out of the tangle in which the Philippine problem has ecome enmeshed—the best for us because it satisfies our atural and legitimate longing to live an entirely free and ndependent national life; the best for the American people ecause it provides a way out of the danger to her own inter-sts, economic and otherwise, without discriminating against is. If this is done, then the United States would be fully justi-ied in safeguarding her own interests in the manner the con-erns affected propose. We are either under the American lag or we are not under the American flag. Despite all the dvantages and the blessings which we have derived from our very fruitful association with America, for which we are eternally grateful, we prefer separation, for only in that way can we preserve our national identity, no matter how umble that may be.

A new era has dawned in the Philippines, an era fraught with problems that challenge the highest type of statesmanship; the new Governor General on the one side and the Filipino leaders on the other are making an earnest endeavor to approach these problems with sympathetic understanding. And in the atmosphere of mutual friendship which now happily obtains in the Islands the Philippine problem should come to an early solution.

## Contributors to This Issue

DUDLEY NICHOLS was the special correspondent of the New York *World* at the Blymyer trial.

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**At Muhlenberg Branch Library**
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Monday, Jan 28—Mark Van Doren—"Shaw"
Wednesday, Jan. 30—Scott Buchanan—"Poetry—The Mathematics of Style."
Thursday, Jan. 31—E. G. Spaulding—"Is a Synthesis of These Views Possible?"
Saturday, Feb. 2—Mortimer J. Adler—"Legal Causistry—The Problem of Mixed Evidence."

## DISCUSSION

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## CORRECTION

In the SONAQUA CLUB advertisement which appeared in the last issue of *The Nation*, the weekly rate was given incorrectly as $40. The rate should be $30 per week.

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